NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07955887 4

Presented by

[illegible]

to the

New York Public Library

LECTURES

ON

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

BY

ENOCH POND, D.D.,

PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, BANGOR.

FOURTH EDITION.

BOSTON:

CONGREGATIONAL PUBLISHING SOCIETY,

CONGREGATIONAL HOUSE.

1875.

PREFACE.

THE history of this volume may be given in a few words. For more than twenty years I was Professor of Theology in the Seminary at Bangor, giving instructions, at the same time, as I was able, in Ecclesiastical History. At length, at my suggestion, Dr. Harris was appointed to the chair of Theology, and I was transferred to the department of History. Of course the theological lectures which I had written were no longer needed or used in the Seminary, and I was requested by the late Secretary of the Congregational Board to prepare them for publication by that body. In due time they were prepared, were read and accepted by a committee of the Board, and the expectation was that they would soon be published. But, in consequence of the war, the publication was suspended, and has remained suspended until the present time. The publishing of them has now been undertaken, and is to be carried through.

For the sentiments advanced in the Lectures, I make no apology. They are such, in the general, as have been held by the great body of our churches and ministers for more than half a century, and are commonly known as the New England Theology. They are supposed to be strictly Calvinistic; and yet, on some points, they vary in statement from the views of the old school Calvinists. The differences, however, are more in statement than in substance, and by candid inquiry and discussion might be chiefly if not entirely removed.

In point of church government, the Lectures will be found to be Congregational. With the convictions of the writer, they could not be otherwise. Yet I have endeavored to treat those who think differently on the subject with candor and kindness.

The form of the Lectures has grown out of the plan of study pursued at the Seminary. In entering upon my duties as a teacher of Theology, I resolved to pursue, so far as possible in a public institution, the method of the old clerical New England teachers. Accordingly, when entering upon a topic, I first gave out a list of books to be consulted. After a day or two, the class came together, a lecture was read, and the whole subject was freely discussed. On some of the more difficult subjects, two or more lectures were read, and the discussion was continued. At the close of the discussion, each member of the class was required to prepare an essay on

the subject. At a subsequent session, the essays were read and remarked upon, and this brought the whole subject under discussion again. The topic in hand being thus disposed of, another was taken up and treated in the same way; and thus the course of study was pursued until all the topics embraced in it had been investigated.

I refer to our method of study, only as it serves to explain and to justify the form of the Lectures. They are not sermons, like those of Dr. Dwight, which were delivered to a public assembly on the Sabbath. Neither are they mere technical, scientific forms, to be enlarged upon, *ex tempore*, by the lecturer, and to be taken down in notes by those who hear them. They are, rather, *theological essays*, written out in full, and read to the students, not to be servilely copied or imitated, but to awaken thought and interest, and to assist them in the difficult work of writing which was to follow.

Prepared in this way, and for such a purpose, the Lectures are adapted to be read and studied, not only by ministers and theological students, but by intelligent Christians generally. They are adapted to be used in theological classes, should any such be formed in our congregations. They are adapted and intended for a somewhat general circulation. Whether they shall obtain such a circulation, it will be for the public to decide. My most earnest desire is that they may be instrumental in diffusing a correct and connected knowledge of gospel truth, and in guiding my Christian brethren and sisters, and all who may consult them, in the right way of the Lord.

ENOCH POND.

Theological Seminary, Bangor, November 26, 1866.

CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

Page

God a personal Being. His existence cannot be proved on the mere authority of Scripture. *A priori* reasonings to prove his existence. The idea of God not innate, and not a matter of personal consciousness. Proposed to follow the example of the sacred writers, and reason from effect to cause. Assumptions involved in this kind of reasoning. The existence of God proved from the existence of matter, even in its elements; from the compounds of matter; from existing organizations of matter; from the existence of mind; from the necessity of a sustaining, moving power in the universe; from the existence of such a book as the Bible; from miracles; from retributive providences; from answers to prayer; from God's works of grace; from the witness within ourselves; from the general consent of mankind. Proofs of the divine existence clear and convincing, ... 25

LECTURE II.

ATHEISTICAL OBJECTIONS.

The objection of material, specific tendencies. Also, of inherent, material life. The development theory. The doctrine of chance. Objections to the argument from design. Everything ascribed to nature. The Creator of the world may not have been the first cause. Creation an impossibility. Imperfections in what are called the works of God, ... 41

LECTURE III.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

God a Spirit; self-existent; eternally existent; independent; omnipresent; omnipotent; omniscient; infinite in wisdom; a free moral agent; infinitely holy, just and good, and happy. God is one, ... 49

LECTURE IV.

NEED OF A REVELATION.

Page

A revelation needed to disclose new and important truths; to confirm many things taught by reason; to furnish new motives for the performance of duty. All this illustrated in the religions of heathen nations; in their philosophies, and in their morals. If a revelation is so much needed, why not given to all men? This question answered, ... 59

LECTURE V.

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE.

The word canon defined. The canon of the Old Testament settled by our Saviour. His Old Testament the same as ours. Reasons for rejecting the apocryphal books. The canon of the New Testament not settled at once, nor by any decisive act of the whole church, but by the authority of the Apostles and early Christian fathers. The principles on which it was settled, and proof that it was settled right. Reasons for rejecting the apocryphal books of the New Testament. An objection of the Romanists answered, ... 63

LECTURE VI.

AUTHENTICITY OR GENUINENESS OF SCRIPTURE.

Authenticity of Scripture defined. No valid evidence against it. Stronger reasons for it than for the authenticity of any other ancient writings. The difficulties of supposing our sacred books forgeries. The testimony of heathens and heretics to their authenticity. Their authenticity proved from their style. The different books confirm the authenticity one of another. The proofs of their authenticity continually increasing, ... 79

LECTURE VII.

THE UNCORRUPTEDNESS OF SCRIPTURE.

No proof of essential alterations. Next to impossible that the Scriptures should have been essentially corrupted. Great care of the Jews and Christians to preserve them accurate. The subject has been thoroughly investigated. A vast proportion of the different readings of no importance. A few passages may have been intentionally altered, ... 87

LECTURE VIII.

THE CREDIBILITY OF SCRIPTURE.

Page

The truth of Scripture inferred from its authenticity. Testimony of the early enemies of Christianity to its truth. The testimony of the Apostles and Evangelists. This conforms to all the laws of valid testimony, and is conclusive. The truth of Scripture proved from existing facts. Also, from the conscious experience of Christians. Arguments for the truth of Scripture constantly increasing, ... 93

LECTURE IX.

THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

The divine authority of Scripture proved from its truth; from miracles; from prophecy; from the rapid propagation of Christianity; from the nature and excellence of its doctrine; from the purity of its moral code; from its fulness; from its exact adaptedness to human wants; from the harmony of its several parts; from the peculiar manner of the sacred writers; from the excellent power of the gospel; and from the witness which the Christian has to its divine original in his own soul, ... 106

LECTURE X.

THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

The subject explained. Inspiration probable, *à priori*. Proved from the style and manner of the sacred writers. Much of the Bible must be inspired, if true. The sacred writers had the promise of inspiration. They claimed it. They assert it one of another, and of the Scriptures generally. Inspiration the doctrine of the church in all ages. Objections considered. Importance of the doctrine, ... 121

LECTURE XI.

THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE.

There are established principles of interpreting language. From these many depart in interpreting the Bible. Importance of adhering to them in their application to the Bible as well as to other books. Concluding remarks, ... 141

LECTURE XII.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

Page

Christ a divine person. This proposition explained, and the proper divinity of Christ proved. Divine attributes ascribed to him. Divine names and epithets applied to him. He performed divine works. He received divine worship. He claimed divine honors. Christ also a human person. The mystery of the incarnation. Christ the constituted Mediator between God and man. Import of the phrase, *Son of God*. Importance of the whole doctrine of Christ, ... 153

LECTURE XIII.

THE PERSONALITY AND DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The doctrine explained. Proofs of personal distinctions in the Godhead. One of these persons is the Holy Spirit. Objections to the personality of the Spirit. Proof of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Great importance of the doctrine, ... 164

LECTURE XIV.

THE TRINITY.

The doctrine explained. The divine unity asserted. A plurality of persons in the one God. The persons of the Godhead no more nor less than three. Traces of a Trinity among the heathen. Held by the early Christian fathers. Objections considered. Importance of the doctrine, ... 172

LECTURE XV.

THE DECREES OR PURPOSES OF GOD.

The doctrine defined. Both reasonable and scriptural. Important distinctions in regard to it. Foreknowledge based upon it. Proofs of the universality of God's purposes. Proofs of their eternity. Objections considered. Difficulties in rejecting the doctrine. Not exclusively a doctrine of revelation, ... 182

LECTURE XVI.

ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

Page

These doctrines included in that of God's universal purposes. Both of them scriptural. Neither of them conditioned on foreseen moral character, but both include character. Not arbitrary decrees, but based on good and sufficient reasons, known only to God. Reprobation not the precise counterpart of election. Objections considered, . . . 194

LECTURE XVII.

THE PURPOSES OF GOD, AS SEEN IN HIS WORKS.

The works of God disclose his purposes. They are the best means of investigating his purposes. Whatever God does in time he purposed to do in eternity. Whatever is proper for him to do in time, was proper for him to purpose in eternity. Objections obviated in this way. Those who approve of God's dispensations, will approve of his purposes, ... 203

LECTURE XVIII.

ABUSES AND USES OF THE DOCTRINE OF GOD'S PURPOSES.

Abuses of this doctrine, under several particulars. Still, the doctrine has important uses, and should be received and investigated. Its uses, under several particulars, pointed out, ... 211

LECTURE XIX.

THE WORKS OF GOD.—CREATION.—THE ANGELS.

Creation defined. The angels first created. The angels are spirits,—of different orders,—older than men, and superior to them. They were once on probation, when a part of them fell. Employments of angels, the holy and the fallen. Proof of the existence of fallen angels. They are bound, with us, to the final judgment, ... 221

LECTURE XX.

CREATION OF THIS WORLD.

Page

A distinction between the original creation, and the six days' work. The former took place at a period vastly remote; the latter about six thousand years ago. A commentary on the first chapter of Genesis. The days here spoken of supposed to be literal days, and not indefinitely long periods. The work of creation honorable to the Supreme Being, ... 235

LECTURE XXI.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

The work of providence consists in "preserving and governing." The work of preserving considered. Governing includes the disposal of all things, and also moral government. The providence of God particular and universal, extending to the moral world, as well as to the natural. God works by means, and according to established laws. Objections considered. The doctrine one of great importance, theologically and practically, ... 245

LECTURE XXII.

THE DESIGN OR END OF GOD IN HIS WORKS.

The design of God in his works is to glorify himself in the highest possible degree, and thus secure the highest good of the universe, as a whole. God's essential glory and his declarative glory. The former stands connected with his works; the latter is promoted by them. The end here proposed is a most worthy one, in the promotion of which God is supremely glorious and happy, ... 256

LECTURE XXIII.

GOD THE SUPREME DISPOSER AND A MORAL GOVERNOR.

God assumes these different offices the better to unfold himself to his creatures, and display his glory. The two offices described. The language appropriate to each very different. The atonement of Christ stands connected with moral government. The distinction here illustrated one of great importance, theologically and practically, ... 264

LECTURE XXIV.

THE HUMAN MIND.

Page

The subjects of mind and religion intimately connected. The mind considered under four departments,—the sensational, the intellectual, the emotional, and the voluntary. The sensational and intellectual departments described. Our ideas, external and internal, considered. Judgment and reason explained. The sensibilities classified. The subject of conscience examined. The sensibilities important because of their influence as motives, and because of their connection with religious experience and character, ... 276

LECTURE XXV.

THE WILL.

The will a distinct and most important faculty. Its exercises classified. The will, like all our other faculties, has its laws. The laws of the will stated and illustrated. The influence of motives, external and internal. The power of contrary choice considered, ... 286

LECTURE XXVI.

THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

The question stated. Neither natural depravity, nor God's purposes and foreknowledge, nor his providential control over the hearts of men, inconsistent with moral freedom. The self-originating power of the will considered and refuted. Freedom of will belongs to the very nature of the will, and can never be separated from it. Importance of the subject, ... 299

LECTURE XXVII.

NATURAL AND MORAL ABILITY, NECESSITY, ETC.

The distinction between natural and moral ability explained and illustrated. Applies to internal exercises, as well as to overt actions. Objections considered, and inquiries answered. The distinction between natural and moral necessity. Importance of these distinctions, ... 307

LECTURE XXVIII.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG.

Page

Different theories of right and wrong considered. That of the tendencies of action. That of the mere will of God. That of the constitution of the human mind. The distinction between right and wrong immutable and eternal, founded in the nature and relations of things,—ultimately in the very nature of God. The law of God the grand exponent of right, but not the ground of it. The office of conscience is to discover the right. When it is right to follow the dictates of conscience, ... 317

LECTURE XXIX.

NATURE OF HOLINESS AND OF SIN.

Both holiness and sin in their natures active. This proposition explained and proved, and objections answered. Importance of this view of the subject. All holiness resolvable into disinterested and impartial love; all sin into selfishness. This proposition explained and established, ... 330

LECTURE XXX.

INTRODUCTION OF SIN.

Ancient theories respecting it. Sin did not enter the universe because God was not able to prevent it. This proposition established. Sin permitted to enter the universe because God saw that its existence could be overruled for an overbalancing amount of good. Objections answered. Sin not a *means* of the greatest good. Concluding remarks, ... 340

LECTURE XXXI.

MAN BEFORE THE FALL.

Man before the fall had the same faculties as now, though not in the same state. He had all the knowledge needful in his circumstances. He was subject to the divine law and government. He was perfectly holy. He was on a probation of law or works. The death threatened in case of transgression, ... 353

LECTURE XXXII.

THE TEMPTATION AND FALL OF MAN.

Page

What was the serpent? His speaking not necessarily a miracle. The temptation and fall explained. Consequence of the fall. The curses explained. Man placed on a new probation, ... 360

LECTURE XXXIII.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL, DEPRAVITY, ETC.

The depravity of man universal. This proposition proved from Scripture, observation, history and experience. The depravity of man total. This proposition explained, and proved from the Bible, from observation, and from the experience of all good men. Importance of the doctrine, ... 369

LECTURE XXXIV.

NATURAL DEPRAVITY.

A scriptural doctrine. A consequence of Adam's first sin. Different theories of natural depravity considered. Natural depravity the result of a general law,—the great law of likeness. Difficulties obviated, ... 382

LECTURE XXXV.

THE CHARACTER OF INFANTS.

Infants are sinners. This proposition explained and proved. How are they sinners? Not that they sinned in a previous state of existence. Not that they have a sinful nature, as distinct from sinful, selfish affections. But that they have such affections,—the beginnings, the germs of actual sin, from the first. Difficulties removed. Importance of this view of the subject, ... 391

LECTURE XXXVI.

THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST.—ITS NECESSITY.

Page

The word *atonement* explained. Not the same as redemption. Its necessity proved from Scripture, and from common life. An atonement necessary, in order that sinners may come to repentance. Also necessary, to honor the law of God, vindicate his authority, and satisfy his justice, ... 405

LECTURE XXXVII.

THE ATONEMENT.—ITS NATURE AND EFFICACY.

The atonement of Christ consisted, not in his personal obedience or holiness, but in his sufferings and death. This view explained and proved. Objections answered. The death of Christ availed to make an atonement, not by his paying our debt to justice, or suffering for us the proper penalty of the law, but by his suffering a governmental equivalent for the penalty. Objections answered. This the view taken by the most respectable theologians, ... 414

LECTURE XXXVIII.

THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST.—COLLATERAL TOPICS.

The atonement universal, as to its sufficiency. It has been accepted of the Father. The sufferings of Christ confined to his human nature; yet vastly more intense than unassisted human nature could have sustained. They were, in the circumstances, an ample substitute, a full equivalent, for the penalty of the law. Objections answered. Importance of the doctrine, ... 425

LECTURE XXXIX.

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

Christ intercedes in heaven, by appearing there with his finished atonement; by literally praying for his people; by presenting *their* prayers to God, and making them acceptable; by answering all the charges brought against them. Christ intercedes, not only for his people, and for his church, but in some sense for all men. The blessing flowing from his intercessions innumerable and eternal, ... 434

LECTURE XL.

THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

Page

The word *covenant* defined. The covenant of grace described. Distinguished from the covenant of redemption. Conditions and promises of the covenant of grace. Our church covenants contain the covenant of grace, but are not the covenant itself, . . . 445

LECTURE XLI.

REGENERATION.

The necessity of regeneration. Regeneration consists, not in baptism; nor in a change of profession; nor in a gradual reformation; nor in the bestowment of any new faculties; but in a yielding, for the first time, of the heart, the affections, unto God. Proved to be an active change. No essential difference between the regeneration of a sinner and his conversion. Importance of the view here taken. Truth the motive cause of regeneration; the Holy Spirit the efficient cause; the subject of it the active cause or agent, ... 452

LECTURE XLII.

REGENERATION—CONCLUDED.

Collateral inquiries. How the Holy Spirit can be the efficient cause of regeneration, and yet the subject of it be active? The influence of the Spirit in regeneration not mediate only, but direct. How regeneration differs from sanctification. How the backslidden believer differs from the impenitent sinner. Evidences of regeneration, ... 464

LECTURE XLIII.

REPENTANCE.

Repentance not the same as doing penance; nor an outward reformation; but an internal, spiritual affection. It includes conviction of sin; godly sorrow for sin; self-abhorrence on account of it; and a voluntary turning from it. True and false repentance distinguished. Why repentance is necessary in order to forgiveness. Not an arbitrary condition of the covenant of grace, but one of inherent necessity. The question whether repentance precedes or follows regeneration considered, ... 471

LECTURE XLIV.

FAITH IN CHRIST.

Page

True faith in Christ includes an intellectual assent to the whole doctrine of Christ; a love for this doctrine; a cordial committing of the lost soul to Christ; and a determination to obey and follow him. True faith distinguished from every form of false faith. Faith not an arbitrary condition of salvation, but one of inherent and indispensable necessity. How faith in Christ differs from faith in God, ... 478

LECTURE XLV.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

Legal justification described. This impossible to the sinner. Evangelical justification described. The same as forgiveness, using the word forgiveness in the largest sense. The atonement the sole ground of the sinner's justification. Faith in Christ the great condition of it. Justification not complete in this life. Full and final justification conditioned on perseverance; yet no uncertainty as to the issue. This doctrine often disputed. A doctrine of vital importance, ... 484

LECTURE XLVI.

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

Perseverance explained. The doctrine proved. Objections answered. Importance of the doctrine, ... 491

LECTURE XLVII.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

The doctrine stated and explained. The question one of mere fact. Arguments in favor of perfection in this life examined. Arguments against the doctrine of perfection. Pretences to perfection of dangerous influence, ... 498

LECTURE XLVIII.

MEANS OF GRACE.

Page

Means of grace described. No inherent efficacy in means, but a constituted tendency to move and sanctify the soul. Men never sanctified without means. How persons are to use means for their own good, and for the good of others. How sinners should be directed. This subject formerly much disputed in New England, ... 513

LECTURE XLIX.

PRAYER.

A definition of prayer, and of acceptable prayer. The prayer of faith. An error concerning it refuted. The efficacy of prayer explained. Infidel objections to prayer removed. Inquiries answered. What the proper object or design of prayer, ... 520

LECTURE L.

DEATH.

Death not an eternal sleep. Not a temporary sleep of the soul. The soul not material. Death the separation of soul and body. Proof that death terminates the probation of man. Sin the procuring cause of death. Its final causes, ... 530

LECTURE LI.

IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES OF DEATH.

Consequences to the body,—and to the soul. The soul, while separate from the body, retains a substantial, conscious, active existence. The question of an intermediate place. Arguments in favor of it considered. The existence of such a place disproved. The soul passes through a private, personal judgment at death. Spirits recognize each other in the future world. The nature of their enjoyments and sufferings, ... 541

LECTURE LII.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

Page

The doctrine explained, and popular objections removed. The resurrection of the body proved from Scripture. The wicked raised, as well as the righteous. The resurrection to occur on the morning of the last day. Interpretation of Rev. xx. 4–6. This doctrine denied by the Gnostics, and by some religionists at this day, ... 555

LECTURE LIII.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

The subject explained. The fact of a general judgment proved. When the judgment will take place. Who is to be the judge. Who to be judged. For what to be judged. Duration of the judgment. Object of the judgment, or ends to be answered by it. The issues of the judgment, ... 567

LECTURE LIV.

FINAL STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED.

Final state of the righteous. Heaven a place. Nature of heavenly enjoyments. Final state of the wicked. Nature of their sufferings. They will be endless. Arguments in proof of this proposition, and against the final restoration of the wicked, ... 574

LECTURE LV.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

Objections from the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. From the justice of God. From various passages of Scripture. The case of the heathen considered. History of Universalism, ... 583

LECTURE LVI.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF UNIVERSALISM.

Page

The form advocated by Relly and others. The sins of men punished, but the sinner saved. The necessarian form. The restoration form. The form advocated by Mr. Hosea Ballou fully considered. The infidel form. All these should be well understood at this day, ... 598

LECTURE LVII.

ANNIHILATION.

Different theories of annihilation. Arguments in favor of annihilation considered and refuted. Argument against it urged. Evil consequences of the doctrine, ... 610

LECTURE LVIII.

THE SABBATH.

The Sabbath was instituted in Paradise. Arguments to show that the law of the Sabbath is of universal and perpetual obligation. The Sabbath to be observed, under the gospel, on the first day of the week. Objections answered. How and why the Sabbath should be observed, ... 626

LECTURE LIX.

THE CHURCH.

Use of the word *church* in the Scriptures. The church of God the same, under the patriarchal, the Jewish, and Christian dispensations. The Apostolic churches voluntary associations, composed of professed believers in Christ, and based upon the holy Scriptures. The question of written creeds and covenants. The primitive churches were independent bodies, choosing their own officers, holding and managing their own property, and regulating all their appropriate concerns. The privileges of church-membership, ... 640

LECTURE LX.

THE OFFICERS OF A CHURCH.

Page

The arguments in favor of bishops examined and refuted. Only two orders of officers in a church, pastors and deacons. No lay elders in the primitive churches. Deacons not, by their office, preachers. Ordination. This to be performed by ministers, ... 651

LECTURE LXI.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

Church discipline defined. The proper subjects of it offending members. The power of discipline in the church. The ends to be attained by discipline. Interpretation of Matt. xviii. 15–17. The powers and rights of ecclesiastical councils. How excommunicants are to be regarded. Church discipline throughout a work of love, ... 663

LECTURE LXII.

THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

Signification of the word *sacrament*, and its introduction among Christians. Essential marks of a Christian sacrament. Five of the Romish sacraments without these marks. Only two sacraments remaining,—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The saving efficacy of the sacraments conditioned upon faith. Benefits of the sacraments, ... 669

LECTURE LXIII.

BAPTISM.

Baptism with water an ancient religious rite. Jewish proselyte baptism. The baptism of John a preparatory and not a Christian ordinance. Baptism both a sign and a seal. Immersion not essential to valid baptism. Baptism not to be repeated. The question of Romish, and Unitarian, and Universalist baptisms. Importance of liberality and candor among Christians in regard to this subject, ... 680

LECTURE LXIV.

SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

Page

Adult persons who give evidence of piety are proper subjects. So also are children under the care and government of church-members. Arguments in support of this proposition. Objections answered. The right of infants to baptism lies in the very constitution of the church, and should be studied and settled there, ... 691

LECTURE LXV.

IMPORT, DESIGN, AND USES OF INFANT BAPTISM.

Infant baptism both a sign and a seal. The truths set forth by it as a sign. As a seal it ratifies a covenant between God and the parent respecting the child. What this covenant is. Baptized children not as yet church-members, but belong to the church by promise. Inferences and remarks. Infant baptism of good practical influence, ... 701

LECTURE LXVI.

CLOSE COMMUNION.

Close communion defined. Arguments against it. How it may be done away. Objections considered, and inquiries answered, ... 712

LECTURE LXVII.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The Lord's Supper an institution of Christ, to be perpetuated in his church. Early perversion of the supper. Objections to consubstantiation and transubstantiation. The Lord's Supper both a sign and a seal. What it denotes as a sign. Its sealing efficacy. Mode of administering the ordinance. Designed only for Christians, ... 729

LECTURE LXVIII.

POPERY AS A FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

Page

The theory of Popish authority stated. No supremacy ever conferred upon Peter by Christ, or acknowledged by the other apostles, or claimed by himself. Peter was never bishop of Rome. Or if he had been, he conferred no authority on his successors. The whole fabric a usurpation, ... 742

LECTURE LXIX.

PROSPECTS OF THE CHURCH ON EARTH.

The church is yet to prevail over all the earth. The period of its universal prevalence commonly called the Millennium. The Millennium not to be introduced by the speedy coming of Christ to destroy this world. Neither by his speedy coming to reign, with his glorified saints, in this world. Both these theories examined and refuted, ... 755

LECTURE LXX.

PROSPECTS OF THE CHURCH ON EARTH—CONCLUDED.

The Millennium not to be introduced by miracles; or by the ministry of angels. Much will be done by providential arrangements. The chief instrumentality will be the faithful preaching of God's truth, and the faithful efforts of his people, accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost. The Millennium to be preceded by the destruction of God's incorrigible enemies. The introduction of this glorious day not distant. Duration of the Millennium. State of the world during that period. Moral purposes to be answered by it, ... 765

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

LECTURE I.

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

By the existence of God, I mean a *personal* existence;—that he is a literal Being, possessed of personal attributes and powers, the adequate and sufficient cause of all other beings and things. Pantheists have much to say of God, and profess to believe in him. But the God in whom they believe has no distinct personal existence. He is but a name for the various powers, processes, and laws of nature. He is a *personification*, and not a person; a figure of speech, and not a reality. In opposition to all such theories and speculations, we believe in the existence of a *personal God*, and shall endeavor to prove his existence from the light of nature and reason.

Some have doubted as to the importance of this kind of proof. "The Scriptures," they say, "affirm the divine existence, and that is enough. If persons will not believe the Bible, they certainly will not be convinced by the mere deductions of reason." But let such persons remember that the existence of God is *assumed* in the divine authority of Scripture. What is it that gives to the declarations of Scripture that high and sacred authority that we ascribe to them? Is it not this, that they are *the word of God?* But for this assumed fact, they would have no more authority than any other book. But if the Scriptures are the word of God, then there *must be a God*, whose word they are. The divine existence is manifestly assumed here. Hence, to rest the divine existence on the mere authority of Scripture is absurd. It is to reason in a circle. If the existence of God cannot be proved in some other way than this, obviously, it cannot be proved at all.

Besides, we not unfrequently have occasion to deal with persons who do not admit the divine authority of Scripture; and we should be able, if possible, to convince them, on other grounds, that there is a God.

The attempt has often been made to prove the divine existence by an *à priori* course of reasoning; that is, by reasoning from antecedent to consequent, or from cause to effect. But the very conditions of the case would seem to preclude this kind of reasoning. Has God any antecedents? Is he not literally *before* all things? And, being himself the first cause of all, in what sense can he be regarded as an effect? How, then, shall an *à priori* argument be constructed to prove the existence of the Supreme Being? Accordingly, we find that such arguments are, in the general, mystical, recondite, rather puzzling than convincing, and not at all adapted for popular impression and use.

Dr. Samuel Clark's celebrated argument, *à priori*, to prove the divine existence, is to this effect: Immensity and eternity are *necessary ideas*,—ideas of which we can never rid ourselves. But, as these are not substances, but qualities, there must be *something* infinite and eternal to which they belong. The supposition of an infinite and eternal nothing is absurd. Now, I agree with Dr. Clark, that an infinite and eternal nothing involves an absurdity. And if we knew enough about the matter to fix precisely upon this impossibility, define it, and show what it is, perhaps we might draw out from it an argument of an *à priori* character to prove that *something* infinite must have existed from eternity. But whether this something, if it existed, could be shown to be God, and whether we know enough of the subject at present to construct such an argument, may well be doubted.

Anselm and Descartes inferred the existence of God from the fact that they had the *idea* of an absolutely perfect being,—a being existing from necessity, and without a cause. In other words, they could *conceive* of the existence of such a being, and could not conceive of his non-existence. They concluded, therefore, that he exists.[1] But the force of this argument has

[1] See Anselm's Proslogian, chaps. ii. and iv.

been generally denied; and it is doubtful whether any one was ever convinced by it. It was better adapted to the genius of schoolmen than to the conceptions of ordinary life.

Some tell us that the idea of God is implanted in our very nature, is born with us, and never can be wholly eradicated. But this statement is inadmissible. The ideas which we entertain of God are not innate, but acquired. Nor is it difficult to understand how we acquire them. The elements of them are furnished in our own minds. Man was made *in the image of God.* Much importance is to be attached to this representation of Holy Writ. As we are spirits, so God is a spirit. As we possess intelligence, wisdom, and power, so God possesses the same attributes, in an infinite degree. Were it not that we were made in the image of God, we might never be able to form any idea of him. But as it is, we have only to carry out the ideas which we have of ourselves, of our substance and attributes, to infinitude, to perfection; and we have an idea of the Supreme Being, — at least, we have the essential lineaments of that great idea.

For evidence of the divine existence, some persons profess to rely on their own *internal consciousness.* They are as conscious of God's existence as they are of their own. Some profess to be even more conscious of the former than of the latter. Persons who talk in this manner are little better than pantheists. They believe that God is literally *in them;* that they are partakers of his essence; that they are part and particle of God. Now, if this were true, they might be supposed, perhaps, to have some consciousness of the fact, and so might be conscious of the divine existence. But *is this true?* If it is true of one man, it is true of all men; and then why do not all possess the same consciousness? And if all men arrive at a knowledge of God in this way, then why are so many ignorant of him? And why are so many absurd and contradictory ideas entertained respecting him?

I *infer* the divine existence from my own; and that, too, by a very short argument, — so short that I may be hardly conscious of the process. Still, the knowledge which I have of the Supreme Being, I hold to be from reason, and not from con-

sciousness. I am not directly conscious of the divine existence, nor do I believe that such a consciousness is possible.

The reasoning of the inspired writers on the subject before us, so far as we have any specimens of it, is all *à posteriori*, or from effect to cause. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge" (Ps. xix. 1, 2). "The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, *being understood from the things that are made*" (Rom. i. 20). "Every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God" (Heb. iii. 4).

In my attempts to prove the divine existence, I shall follow the example of the sacred writers in this respect, and argue from effect to cause. I shall endeavor to prove the existence of the invisible God from *the things which are made*, or from *his works*.

But this argument, like every other, rests on some necessary *assumptions*. We assume, in the first place, our own existence, and the existence of beings and things around us, and within us, according to the testimony of our senses and our consciousness; because, if we do not ourselves exist, we certainly cannot reason on this subject or on any other. We cannot believe or disbelieve, deny, or so much as doubt, anything. And if objects within us and around us do not exist, according to the testimony of the senses and of consciousness, then we have naught on which to found an argument, and all our reasonings must be vain.

We assume, in the second place, that every effect must have a cause, and a sufficient cause. The necessary connection between cause and effect is one of those axioms, or primary truths, which can never be made any clearer by argument. We intuitively perceive that *it must be so;* and without supposing it, no process of reasoning, at least in the direction in which we are now to reason, can be sustained. With these necessary assumptions, I proceed to adduce arguments in proof of the divine existence. And —

1. I infer the existence of God from the existence of *matter*,

even in its *simple, elementary state.* Matter, in this state, must either have had a beginning, — and if a beginning, a cause, a creator, — or it must have existed from all eternity. Between these two suppositions there is no alternative. The one or the other must be true. Are we, then, to suppose elementary matter to be eternal? Such was the opinion of all the ancient heathen philosophers. Those of them who believed in a God supposed him not to have *given existence* to matter, but merely to have organized, shaped and controlled it; while the atheistic philosophers held matter to be eternal, and believed in no God besides. Some Christians have been inclined to concede the eternity of matter, or have held that the contrary could not be proved. The question, then, is one of vital importance in this argument, and requires an extended and careful consideration: *Has matter, even in its elements, existed from eternity?* The Scriptures decide this question in the negative; but we are not now to depend on them for proof. What is the testimony of nature and reason on the subject?

In answer to this question I remark, in the first place, that if matter is eternal then it possesses some of the essential attributes of God, and must be regarded as in some sense divine. If matter is eternal, without beginning and without cause, then it must be *self-existent* and *independent.* It exists from an inherent and eternal *necessity.* But self-existence, necessary existence, independence and eternity, are most essentially divine attributes. They belong only to God.

Nor are these the only divine attributes to be ascribed to matter, on supposition of its eternal and necessary existence. If it exist from necessity, it would seem that it must be *omnipresent.* A necessary existence, like a necessary truth, is not limited by time or space. As a necessary truth is true everywhere, so a necessary existence must exist everywhere. There is the same necessity for it in one place as in another. On the supposition before us, therefore, matter ought to be universally diffused and extended. It should occupy every interstice of space, and be literally omnipresent.

It should also be *immutable.* Every change is an effect, and implies a cause. But, according to the supposition, matter is

without cause. Hence, it must be without change; or, in other words, immutable. Besides, since that inherent necessity which, if matter be eternal, is the ground of its existence, is immutable, it follows that matter itself must be immutable.

In short, if matter is eternal, then it possesses, as I said, some of the essential attributes of God, and may well claim to be divine. Let us, then, examine and see whether matter actually possesses these divine attributes. Does it give any sign of possessing them? Does it afford any evidence? Or are not all the signs and evidences the other way? Take, for example, the attribute of independence,—*strict, absolute independence*,—which matter must certainly possess, on supposition that it is eternal. Is it independent? Does it seem to be? So far from this, every material thing with which we are acquainted is characterized by the opposite attribute of dependence. Everywhere we see one thing resting upon another, hanging upon another, supported by another; or, in other words, *dependent*. I rest upon my chair, and my chair upon the floor, and the floor upon the solid earth. But the earth also must be supported. That can no more rest upon nothing, or support itself, than a stone can.

Again: is matter *omnipresent*, as it would seem it must be, on supposition of its necessary and eternal existence? Is it universally diffused? Does it literally fill every interstice of space? Are we and all other creatures, and every existing thing, so pervaded, surrounded, wedged in, choked up with circumambient matter, that not a vacant interstice is left? Who believes it? Who does not feel assured that this is not the case?

We have seen, again, that if matter is eternal, it ought to be *immutable*. Is it so? On the contrary, is it not passing through a continual flow of changes,—the most fluctuating and changeable of all things?

But perhaps it will be said that, though the *forms* of matter change, its elements remain unchanged and immutable. But if this be so, how are we to account for the changes in its outward forms and manifestations? How can it put on such varied appearances, and exhibit so many different properties, without

any change as to the nature, shape, relations, and positions, of the elementary parts?

We thus see that some of the essential properties of matter—as its dependence, its mutability, and its limited, finite existence—forbid the supposition of its eternity. Other qualities or modifications of it do the same. Thus, if matter exists from an inherent and uniform necessity, — as it must do if it has existed from eternity, — then it ought to exist in a *uniform state;* as, for example, either of motion or rest. And yet we know that it does not. Some portions of matter are in very rapid motion; others move more slowly; others are at rest: while the same portions are frequently passing from one of these states to the other.

The *contingency* of matter, too, as a thing which may be, or may not be, is quite inconsistent, with a notion of its eternity. The things which we behold around us, manifestly, are not *necessary* existences. They are such as *may not have been*, or *may not have been in their present positions and relations*. The supposition that they never had been, or that they had existed at some other time or place, or that something else had come in their places, would involve, so far as we can see, no contradiction or absurdity. But, if material existences are not *necessary* existences, then they are not eternal existences, and the eternity of matter is refuted.

It may be thought, perhaps, that my reasonings, thus far, against the eternity of matter, are too metaphysical to be convincing. We want something of a more tangible, practical character. Let us look, then, at the subject in a historical point of view.

Geology teaches us that this earth has not always been what it now is; that it has passed through a great variety of changes, ever advancing from the less to the more perfect. In the deep foundations of the globe we read the history of these changes, written, as it were, "with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever." This history carries us back to a period when, instead of the present highly organized forms of matter, there is not the least trace of any material organization whatever. "Along the ever rushing stream of time we are conducted backward and

backward, till we reach a spot where all forms of organized existence disappear, and we stand on termination rock." Beyond, so far as organized appearances are concerned, all is darkness. We can neither see nor go any farther. But here, where the lights of history leave us, the light of reason comes in to our aid. The conclusion forces itself upon us, — it is proclaimed, as it were, with the sound of many waters, — that this unorganized matter has not been here always. This retrograde course of things, from the more to the less perfect, does not stop here. It runs us back to a time when there were no material existences; when the world we inhabit had a literal beginning; when what is now compounded in matter was elemental, and when its very ingredients and elements were not.

There is yet another argument to the same point, addressed, not so much to atheists, who admit no God, as to theists, who believe in the existence and providence of God, and yet insist on the eternity of matter. If matter is eternal, God can exercise no effectual and rightful providence over it; and that for several reasons. In the first place, matter being, by the supposition, entirely without God, and independent of him, how can he *know* enough about it to exercise a providence over it? God knows himself, and all his works; but matter, on this supposition, is not his work. He has had nothing to do with it; and how can he know how to organize, to mingle, to fashion, and control it?

Besides, if matter is eternal, how can we be sure that God has *power* enough to exercise a providence over it? He has power over all the work of his hands; but matter, on the supposition, is not the work of his hands. He has power to do all things possible; but it may not be possible for him to exercise an effective control over that which is entirely independent of himself.

But even this is not the worst of it. If matter is eternal, like God, and independent of him, then he has *no right* to take it, and make a world of it, and exercise a government over that world. He has a right to do what he will with his own; but matter, by the supposition, is not his own. He did not create it; he has no just claim to it; he had no right to touch it, or

to do anything with it, unless it be the right of the stronger over the weaker. We see, then, that the doctrine of providence, if it have any just foundation, necessarily involves that of an original creation. It is a complete refutation of the eternity of matter.

I have dwelt the longer on this question of the eternity of matter, on account not only of its intricacy, but its importance. All the old atheists and pantheists held firmly to the doctrine of the eternity of matter. It has been held by some who were not atheists or pantheists. But it has no foundation in reason or fact. The history of material forms, as well as their properties, forbid it. The word and the providence of God forbid it. All these sources of evidence proclaim that matter must have had a beginning; and, if a beginning, then an adequate cause; a creator, which is God.

Having settled, as I conceive, this fundamental question, and closed my first argument for the existence of God, the remaining arguments may be disposed of in fewer words. I observe, therefore:

2. The existence of God may be proved from the existing *mixtures and compounds* of matter. We do not often see matter in its elements. Perhaps we never do. Material objects around us are all of them compounds. And some of them most wonderful compounds. The air we breathe, for example, is so compounded that if the ingredients entering into it were but slightly changed, instead of sustaining and nourishing life, it would become deadly. And the same may be said of the water that gushes from our fountains, and is dropped upon us from the skies. Now, if we were to attribute to elementary matter an eternal existence (which we cannot do), still, how are we to account for these wonderful compounds? Who compounded them? Who combined the elementary ingredients in so many and such admirable forms, and so wisely adapted them to the necessities of the animal and vegetable kingdoms? Do we not here see manifest indications of the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God?

3. The existence of God may be still more conclusively argued from the existing *organizations* of matter. The world

around us abounds in exhibitions of this nature,—*organized* matter,—of matter most curiously and wonderfully organized. Look through the vegetable kingdom, and note the organization of plants and trees, of fruits and flowers and shrubs. Look, again, through the animal kingdom, from the most minute of creatures to the most magnificent, and study the organizations which are there exhibited. Contemplate the structure of the human body, or of any particular part of it; as the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot. This wonderful structure certainly had a beginning, and must have had an adequate cause. Who caused it? Who constructed it? If, from the structure of a knife, a chair, a table, a watch, we infer that each of these articles must have had a maker, much more may we infer from the wonderful structure of the human frame, and from the various forms of organized material existence with which the world around us is filled, that all these things must have had a Maker, who is God.

4. The existence of God may be proved conclusively from the existence of the *human mind*. I assume here that there is a valid distinction between matter and mind. We are conscious of possessing a something within us which exhibits none of the properties of matter, but other properties vastly superior; a something which thinks, feels, reasons, chooses and acts. This something we call mind. Our minds, we know, are finite and dependent. Hence, they cannot be self-existent or eternal. They must have had a beginning; and we know (so far as we know anything about it) that they have been in existence but a little while. How did they originate? Who is their author? They certainly are not the productions of matter; for how could matter give what it does not possess? They are not the work of any creature of which we have knowledge, or of which we can conceive. And if it be said that they came into existence in accordance with some established law, the question arises, Who established this law? And who is the proper author of the human mind? To these questions we shall search in vain for an answer, till we come to the great Originating Mind,—the great First Cause of all.

5. The existence of God may be proved from the necessity

which there is, not only of an originating power in the universe, but of a *sustaining* and *moving power*. It was this argument which established most of the ancient theists in their belief of a God. They did not feel the need of an originating power, believing, as they did, in the eternal existence of matter. But who sustains the mighty mass? Who first moved it, and fashioned it? Whose power is exerted to keep it in motion, according to established laws? These are the questions which stirred the minds of Anaxagoras, of Socrates, of Plato, of Aristotle, and led them, in the midst of surrounding atheism, to assert the existence of a Supreme Disposer.

I have said that there is need in the universe of a *sustaining* power. Matter, in all places and in all the forms which it assumes, is characterized by the same attribute of dependence. One thing hangs upon another, and that on another; and the last of the series, like all the rest, must depend upon something out of itself. And the created mind is as dependent as matter. The power of thought, of feeling, and of action, may be suspended. Not only without our concurrence, but in spite of our resistance, all the powers of the mind may become deranged. In respect both to body and soul, we find ourselves dependent on a power without ourselves and above ourselves, — a power whom we can neither resist nor control.

And there is a necessity in the universe of not only a sustaining, but a *moving* power. Matter is essentially inert, and wholly incapable of moving itself. Who moves it? Who moves the blood in our veins? Who moves the great planets on their axes and in their orbits? And if it be said that these regular movements proceed on the ground of some established law, I ask, as before, Who established the law? And what account shall be given of the numberless *irregular* movements which we witness in the world around us, — those which are not subjected to general law? It must be obvious to every reflecting person that there is needed in the universe, and there is felt, a constantly sustaining and moving power. There is no accounting for existing phenomena on any other supposition. This mighty, sustaining, moving power is that of God. What-

ever inferior instrumentalities may be employed, it must be referred ultimately to him.

6. The existence of such a book as *the Bible* proves the existence of God. The contents of this wonderful book evince that it was not of mere human origin. Unaided men could no more have written the Bible than they could have created the world. Its doctrines surpass all human foresight and wisdom. Its aims transcend all human thought. The character of Christ, as exhibited in the Bible, is such as no mere man ever formed or conceived; such as no pen but that of inspiration could have sketched. The predictions of Scripture — many of which have been most minutely and remarkably fulfilled — prove that it must have been the work of God.

It will be seen that we here appeal, not to the *declarations* of Scripture, in proof of the divine existence, but to the Bible itself, as an *effect*, a *fact*. Here is the book, and here are its contents. And how is its existence to be accounted for, but by referring it to the Great First Cause of all?

7. The fact of *miracles* is conclusive proof of the divine existence. By miracles, I understand those interventions of divine power by which the regular course of nature has been suspended or contravened, and events have been caused to take place in contradiction to it. We have numerous well-authenticated accounts of such miracles in the Bible, — regarding the Bible now as a mere credible history. But we have far more numerous accounts of miracles in the teachings of science and of nature. I refer here to the disclosures of geological science. There are established laws by which the existing species of animals and vegetables may perpetuate themselves. But there is no law by which, when they are destroyed, other species can come up and take their places. The commencement of every new species is, therefore, a miracle. And the past history of the earth, as recorded in the rocks of nature, assures us that miracles innumerable of this kind have occurred. In repeated instances, the existing species of animals and vegetables all over the earth have been swept away, and other and more perfect species have been created in their place. The miracles of Scripture are numerous and great; but it is now certain that

the miracles of nature far transcend them in number and in power. Yet every proper miracle is a work of God. It is such as can be performed by no being but God, and is proof positive of the divine existence.

8. The existence of God may be proved from the fact of a *retributive providence*. Although this life is a scene of probation, and not of righteous retribution, yet, in particular instances, a retribution commences even here,—a retribution so marked and striking as to arrest the attention and challenge the assent of the most skeptical and unbelieving. Who can doubt that the destruction of the old world by a deluge, and of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven, and of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, were events of a retributive character? Who can help regarding in the same light the sparing of Nineveh, on the repentance of its people, or the death of Herod (Acts xii. 23), of Judas Iscariot, and of Ananias and Sapphira? I refer to the Bible here only as to any other authentic history.

But we are indebted not to the Bible alone for our knowledge of retributive judgments. Other histories, and even our own personal observation, often make us acquainted with them. The dreadful overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus was manifestly an event of this character. So also are the judgments which not unfrequently overtake bold blasphemers, cruel persecutors, and other vile transgressors, in the midst of their wickedness, constraining every beholder to say with the Psalmist, "The Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth"—"Verily, there is a God who judgeth in the earth."

9. Clear *answers to prayer* prove that there is a God. No class of events can be better established, not only from sacred but profane history, and from the personal observation of the people of God, than answers to prayer. Such events were of continual occurrence in the history of God's ancient covenant people, and in the early history of the church of Christ. They occurred also among our forefathers, the early settlers of New England. Witness the destruction of the famous Chebucto fleet, in the year 1746. This great fleet, consisting of forty ships of war, was destined for the conquest of New England, and was of sufficient force, in the ordinary progress of things,

to render that conquest certain. Our fathers, having no other resource, betook themselves to prayer; and on the night following their general fast the entire fleet was scattered and destroyed by a terrible tempest. The admiral, the Duke D'Anville, overcome with chagrin and mortification, died almost immediately of apoplexy; and the vice-admiral, in despair, put an end to his own life. Impious men may say that there was nothing remarkable in all this; but our fathers acknowledged the hand of God in it, and devoutly ascribed to him the victory and the glory.

But we need not look to history to find clear and conclusive answers to prayer. They occur in every revival of religion. They fall repeatedly under the notice of almost every observing Christian. But every such instance is proof positive that *there is a God* who hears the cries of his people, and graciously sends them answers of peace.

10. God's works of *grace*, as well as those of nature and providence, demonstrate his existence. By works of grace, I mean those striking and permanent transformations of character which our Saviour denominates *the new birth*, and which involve a radical change of heart. That there were many such changes in the first age of the Christian church, no one who has read its history can doubt. Witness the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost. Nor were such transformations of character peculiar to the primitive age. They have occurred in every period since. They are of frequent joyful occurrence in our own times. They are known and read of all men. They can be as substantially proved as any other events whatever. But every such event involves the interposition of divine power and grace, and is proof positive of the divine existence.

11. Every man has a witness to the existence of God *in his own breast*. I refer not here to that internal *consciousness* of God to which the pantheist pretends, but rather to an argument derived from our natural, indestructible feelings. There is the universal feeling of *dependence*, proclaiming the existence of an almighty Being, on whom we depend. There is also the feeling of *accountableness*, which belongs to our very nature, and

of which the most hardened can never entirely rid themselves, pointing us upward to a superior Power, to whom we must render an impartial account.

12. The *general consent of mankind* may be adduced as evidence of the divine existence. Whether this consent arises from tradition, to be traced back to an original revelation, or from our natural feelings of dependence and accountability, or from the palpable proofs of the divine existence everywhere visible around us, or from all these causes combined, it matters not at all, so far as concerns the present argument. The fact of such consent is undeniable. With the exception of a few individuals here and there, who are to be regarded rather as monsters than men, and a few scattered savages, who are raised but little above the brutes, nearly the entire race of men have been agreed from the first in holding the doctrine of a Supreme Being. This doctrine has been sadly distorted, indeed, in many places — perhaps we ought to say in *most* places — where the light of revelation has not shined. Still, in one form or another, the doctrine has been held. This general agreement is very remarkable, and the conclusion to be drawn from it as to the fact of the divine existence, is very obvious.[1]

The arguments from nature and reason, in proof of the divine existence, are not all of them of equal strength. Some may strike one mind with peculiar force; others may more deeply impress another. But together they constitute an amount of evidence conclusive and resistless. And so they were regarded by the Apostle Paul. "The invisible things of him [God] are *clearly seen*," — yes, CLEARLY SEEN, — "being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they," who have no other light than that of nature, "are without excuse" (Rom. i. 20).

We have more means, I think, of knowing God — knowing *that he is*, and *what he is* — than we have of knowing any other being whom we have not seen with our natural eyes. Perhaps

[1] "Pass over the earth," says Plutarch; "you may discover cities without walls, without literature, without monarchs, without palaces and wealth; where the theatre and the school are not known; but no man ever saw a city without temples and gods, where prayers and oaths, and oracles, and sacrifices, were not used for obtaining pardon or averting evil."

no one of us ever saw Gen. Washington, or Dr. Franklin; and yet we do not doubt that such men once lived in this country, and that they sustained an important part in its history. We believe in the existence of these venerable men chiefly, if not wholly, from their works. They have left the marks of their existence behind them. We have their writings in our hands. Their memorials are recorded on almost every page of our country's history. And yet how few and feeble were *their* works, compared with the nobler, mightier works of the Supreme Being! And how dim the evidence of their existence and characters, shadowed forth from their works, compared with the thousand fold clearer evidence of the divine existence, perfections, and glories, which his works everywhere exhibit! Wherever we look, whether within or without, above or beneath, to the right hand or to the left, to ourselves or to others, everywhere we meet God's handiwork. Every object we behold proclaims his existence, his perfection, and his glory: so that we may say, with the Christian poet,

"The rolling year
Is full of Thee.
Thine is the mighty hand
That, ever busy, wheels the silent spheres;
Works in the secret deep; shoots streaming thence
The fair profusion that o'erspreads the spring;
Flings from the sun direct the flaming day;
Feeds every creature; hurls the tempest forth;
And, as on earth this grateful change revolves,
With transport touches all the springs of life."

LECTURE II.

ATHEISTICAL OBJECTIONS.

THERE is a difference, as Dr. Chalmers has well observed, between atheism and antitheism. The antitheist sets himself to prove positively that *there is no God*,—a work which no created being in the universe can perform, and which few have had the hardihood to attempt. The position of the atheist is a humbler one. He satisfies himself, for the most part, with negations. He criticises the arguments of the theist, and endeavors to remove them. He tries to account for the phenomena of nature without the supposition of an intelligent first cause. He denies that there is any sufficient proof that God exists, though he is far from affirming, positively, that he does not.

One of the oldest and most plausible of atheistic theories is that of *plastic, specific tendencies*. It assumes that all things are material; that the particles of matter are eternal; and that each and all of these particles are endowed with certain *specific tendencies*, in consequence of which they are led to combine, and constitute different forms and organizations, such as we see in the world around us. Hence the fact of such organizations furnishes no proof at all of the divine existence.

It will be seen that this theory assumes that all things are material, and that matter is eternal, both of which propositions are absurd. But let that pass. Allowing matter, in its elements, to be eternal, I deny that these elementary particles possess, inherently, any specific tendencies whatever. Matter is essentially inert, and has no tendency or capability of moving itself any way, or of forming anything, except as it is wrought upon by an extraneous power.

But this is not the only difficulty in the case. If we suppose the elementary particles to possess specific tendencies, can we rationally account for the multiform organizations in the world around us in this way? In order to this, we must ascribe to

each particle, not only a specific tendency, but most exquisite wisdom. To apply the theory to a single case: for example, to the organization of the human body. To account for the formation of a body in this way, we must suppose "that one particle of matter tends to unite with another, and these again with others, but only, at first, in a right line. At length they tend to bend that line into a ring: and then to enlarge that ring into a blood-vessel; and then to branch out into other vessels; and then to compact themselves into bones; and then to make blood; and then to form nerves and flesh; and then to extend into limbs; and then (if not before) to make a heart; and then a pair of lungs; and then the skin, the hair, the nails, and so, in succession, all the functions of the body; and all this without any contrivance or design, merely on the ground of specific tendencies," thus giving a thousand different and inconsistent tendencies to the same elementary particles, not one of which can be proved, or is likely, to have any such tendency at all.

And if it is so difficult to form a body in this way, what must it be to form a soul? For the soul, it must be remembered, on the supposition before us, is all made up of material particles, so brought together by their specific tendencies as to constitute thoughts, purposes, plans, designs, emotions, passions, soaring imaginations, and all the other states and affections of the mind. Surely the advocates of such a theory ought not to complain of mysteries, or of unreasonable, incredible things. Their theory of the universe proves nothing, unless it be that wicked men do not like to retain God in their knowledge, and are ready to resort to any shifts to crowd him out of his own creation.

Near akin to this theory is another, which also originated with the ancient Greeks, and has had its advocates in modern times. It supposes all things to be material, and matter eternal, and that each particle is endowed with *life*, *sense*, and *the power of motion;* powers enough to enable it to perform its part in the multitudinous organizations of the world.[1]

It is enough to say, of the advocates of this theory, that in order to be rid of one great God, they suppose myriads upon

[1] This doctrine of atheism is appropriately called the *Hylozoic;* as the former is the *Hylopathic.*

myriads of little ones; each particle of matter being eternal, self-existent, independent, intelligent; possessing of itself, and in sufficient measure, the more essential attributes of the Supreme Being. And when we ask for the proof of a supposition so monstrous, so contrary to our senses, and to all other available sources of evidence, we are only told that it *may be so*. And if it may be so, then the world, and all it contains, may have come into existence without the intervention of a great First Cause.

A third atheistical theory—*materialistic*, like the last two—assumes that the existing organizations and compounds of matter were never formed; that they are eternal; that things have always existed much as they now are; that there has been what is denominated an *eternal series of things*. But this eternal series of things is only a series of absurdities. It supposes each thing in the series to be *dependent*,—one hanging upon another, and that upon another, like links in an interminable chain,—and yet the whole to be *independent*,—the topmost link (if there be any topmost) hanging upon nothing. It supposes each thing in the series to have had a beginning, and yet the whole to have had no beginning. It supposes the whole series to exist in time, and to be measured by time, and yet that it has existed from all eternity. There is no end to the absurdities to which this senseless theory may be reduced.

But if, with all its absurdities, it should be admitted, it would fail entirely to account for existing facts. An eternal series could only perpetuate itself in the forms of organized existence with which it was running on. It certainly could not originate new species or races—any new forms of animal or vegetable life. And yet it is demonstrably certain that the race of men, and most of the existing species of animals and vegetables, have existed on the earth but a few thousands of years. Geology assures us that races of creatures much older than ourselves have long ago perished from the earth, and that the existing tribes have come into their places. Who formed the existing tribes? On the ground of the eternal series, who gave existence to the bodies and souls of the original progenitors of man?

But here comes in the famed *development theory*, which sup-

poses that by some plastic nature or law the lower forms of organized existence were produced, and that these gradually grew or developed themselves into higher forms, and these again into still higher, until at length man and the present races of animals were brought forth. But this theory is refuted both by reason and fact. In the first place, there is no plastic nature or law by which, without a Creator, the lower forms of organized existence can be produced. Plastic nature of itself could no more produce a worm, or a shell-fish, than it could a man. This has been demonstrated already. If nature alone could ever have produced such creatures, why does it not produce them now? And then, secondly, the different races on the earth never grow or develop into other races. We have never seen such a thing. We have no authentic, reliable account of any such occurrence. By an existing law, the races living at any particular time, and so long as they live, may perpetuate themselves. But for one race to grow or develop into another and higher race, as a frog into a mammal, or a monkey into a man—this is impossible. Geological researches go to show that such a thing has never been, and thus furnish a complete refutation of this whole development theory.

The origin of things as they exist around us has often been referred to *chance*. This was the doctrine of Democritus and Epicurus among the Greeks, and of Lucretius among the Latins. It has had many advocates in modern times. But what is chance? Is it properly anything? We use this word in reference to events which *seem* to us to be fortuitous. But the fortuity, it may be shown, is only in appearance. There is no such thing as chance in the universe. But, suppose there was such a thing, is chance adequate to the creation of the world and of all it contains? Is it reasonable to consider the minute and wonderful organizations which appear around us, displaying so much of wisdom and such exquisite design, as the sport of chance? La Place has well said, "There is infinity to unity against such a supposition."

Various objections have been urged against the argument from *design*,—an argument which seems to us conclusive and incontestable. Thus Mr. Hume insists that nothing can be in-

ferred from the marks of design, apparent in the world around us, as to the fact of an intelligent designer, since we have never *seen* this work of world-making performed. From the mechanism of a watch, we conclude that it had an intelligent designer, because we have seen watches made, or known of their being made. But we have never seen or known of a world's being made, and hence we can draw no conclusions whatever as to its maker. But Mr. Hume mistakes entirely the ground of the argument from design. It is not this, that we have *seen* a particular mechanism constructed or work performed. In that case, we should ground our conclusion on what we had seen and known,—on the testimony of the senses. But here is a mechanism which we have never before seen, and of the origin of which we personally know nothing. But, on examination, it bears incontestable marks of having been *designed*, *contrived*, *got up*, *put together*, for a particular purpose. All this is palpable. There can be no mistake about it. We infer at once, for we cannot help it, that it must have had an intelligent author or designer. We may not know at all who the author is, but we feel just as sure that it had such an author as though we had seen the work performed.

Again: it is denied that there are any sure marks of design in the organization of animals, since the parts and members which they retain are only such as are essential to their existence, all the other parts having been shuffled off and lost in the progress of their development. But why have we not seen animals, during the progress of their development, shuffling off their unessential parts—dropping some unimportant members which chanced to get stuck upon them? If nature has made so many abortions, as on this theory she must have made, why have not some of them come to light?

But it is not true that animals retain only such parts and members as are essential to their existence. They have parts which are perpetuated from generation to generation; which are not essential; which are merely ornamental, or convenient, or in some way conducive to their happiness. Such is the hair on our heads, and the nails on our fingers and toes. Such is the power of speech, and some even of the outward senses.

We know that these are not essential to our existence, because persons exist, in some instances, long years without them.

It has been further objected to the argument from design, that, if it proves anything, it proves too much. For does not God himself exhibit, in the various manifestations which he makes of himself, marks of design? And will it not follow, from the argument, that he, too, must have had a designer? This objection owes all its plausibility to a slight change in the use of the word "design." There is an *active* design, and a *passive* design. God does, indeed, show marks of design in the former sense,—that is, of possessing skill and wisdom, of being an intelligent, active designer; but does he show any marks of passive design, such as is exhibited in his works? Does he show marks of having been himself *designed*, *contrived*, *constructed*, *got up*, with a view to some object or end? Who will presume to say, much less attempt to prove, as much as this? His very nature and attributes all proclaim the contrary.

Persons inclined to be atheists often impose upon themselves and others by mere names. They talk learnedly about the powers of *nature*, and ascribe everything to its efficiency. And yet what is nature but the established constitution of things? And who established this constitution but the Almighty?

The processes and laws of nature are in fact *the God* of the pantheist, and are appealed to as sufficient to accomplish everything. But it is demonstrable that what are called the laws of nature are but established modes of divine operation. They are laws which the Supreme Being has prescribed to himself in directing the ordinary movements of his providence. They are, as the Scriptures more accurately express it, "the ordinances of heaven" (Job xxxviii. 33). There are no inherent powers and tendencies in bodies, in virtue of which they move themselves, and move only in particular ways. This has been shown under a former head. And modern pantheism, at least in one of its forms, is but a revival of the old atheistic theory of specific tendencies.

It has been said that though the world and its organizations must have had a cause, and a sufficient cause, yet this may not have been *the first cause of all*, *the eternal God*, but only some

subordinate agent. But do not creation and providence, and the authorship of the Bible, and the performance of miracles, and other works which we ascribe to our alleged First Cause, involve divine, independent, omnipotent powers,—powers which can belong to no being but the eternal God? What inferior, dependent agent, himself a creature of the Almighty, can perform such works as these? And then, what is gained to the atheist by supposing that this great being, the Creator of heaven and earth, is not himself the first originating cause of all? There must still be an originating cause somewhere, unless we will suppose an eternal series of inferior, dependent causes, which is a palpable absurdity. So that the atheist does not rid himself of an eternal God by thrusting the First Cause further back, and impiously denying appropriate honors to the Creator.

From the position taken in the last objection, namely, that creation does not imply omnipotent power—persons sometimes pass over to the other extreme, and affirm that *creation is an impossibility*. It is what cannot be done, even by omnipotent power. This seems to have been the opinion of all the ancient heathen philosophers. Assuming the axiom *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, even those of them who believed in a God supposed it impossible for him to create a world from nothing. He could only form it from preëxisting and eternal materials. But *is creation*, in the proper sense of the term, an impossibility? An impossibility to whom? To *us*, no doubt, it is impossible; but is it so to Omnipotence? Is it impossible to a being possessed of such attributes and perfections as all consistent theists ascribe to God? Omnipotence can do anything which does not involve a contradiction, an absurdity; and that creation from nothing is chargeable with absurdity has never yet been proved, and never can be.

Finally, it is alleged that this world is full of *imperfections;* that it is not made well enough to be regarded as the work of an infinitely wise and benevolent being. This objection will come into view again, and perhaps more than once, in the course of these Lectures. At present it is enough to say that what are called imperfections may be such only in *appearance*, arising from our very limited and partial view of things.

> "Our *ignorance* may be the cause
> Why thus we blame our Maker's laws;
> Parts of his ways alone we know:
> 'Tis all that man can see below."

Could we survey the great system in all its parts, and scan it with the eye of God, we should find it all perfect like himself.

On a subject like that which has been considered, difficulties, of course, are to be expected, since most parts of it lie quite beyond the reach of our faculties, and are among the secret things which belong only to the Infinite mind. Still, the evidence for the existence of God, shining out from the operations of his hand, are, as I said at the close of my last Lecture, conclusive and abundant—sufficient to convict all those who reject it of guilt, and to cover them with confusion and shame.

In conclusion, let us keep in mind *the greatness* of the truth which has been before us in this discussion,—the greatest, the most important that we shall ever have occasion to contemplate. It is great in itself. It is great in all its relations and results. It lies at the foundation of all religion. It is implied in all our acts of duty and devotion,—in all our hopes and consolations as Christians. Give to the Christian his God,—a reconciled Father in Christ—and he can be happy under any circumstances. But take from him the God in whom he trusts, and what has he more? If it were desirable to be an atheist, we have seen that, in the due exercise of reason, it would not be possible; and if it were possible, certainly it would be of all things most undesirable. It matters little what form or theory of atheism persons adopt; all are alike destitute of one cheering, redeeming quality. They fail alike to furnish support under present trials, while they leave all that is past in utter mystery, and all that is future in the most bewildering and appalling uncertainty. With the utmost satisfaction, therefore, we should receive and ponder the glorious truth which has been established in the foregoing discussion,—*There is a God.*

LECTURE III.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

HAVING already proved the existence of a great originating Cause of all things, which we call God, and replied to some of the more common atheistical objections, we next inquire as to the *attributes* and *perfections* of God. What ideas are we to form of him? What kind of a being is he?

Theologians have distinguished between the natural and moral attributes of God; but, without following this division, I shall proceed to treat of the different divine attributes in the order in which, as it seems to me, they may be best investigated.

It will be impossible in a single lecture fully to discuss a subject which might well occupy volumes. I can but touch upon the different attributes of God, and show how they may be demonstrated, in the briefest manner possible.

Three of the more essential attributes of God—namely, his *self-existence*, his *eternal existence*, and his literal *independence*—are all involved in the very idea of him as the first originating cause. Thus, if he is the first cause of all things, then he is himself without cause. And if there is no cause of his existence out of himself, then he must have the grounds, the elements of existence within himself; which is but saying that he is *self-existent*.

Again: if God is the first cause of all things, and himself without cause, then he must be without beginning; which is but saying that his existence is *eternal*.

Still again: if God is the first cause of all things, and himself without cause, then he has no dependence on any external cause; in other words, he is strictly *independent*. All other things are dependent on him, but he is dependent on nothing out of himself.

It will be seen at once, from these few remarks, that the three great, essential attributes of self-existence, eternal existence, and independence, are all involved in the one idea of God as the first originating cause.

I proceed, therefore, to a fourth divine attribute, and would say that God is a *spiritual* being; in other words, he is *spirit*, and not matter. Inert, unthinking matter could never have been the creator of this material world; much less could it have been the creator of mind. Indeed, matter alone cannot create anything. It cannot move or act at all, except as it is acted upon by some exterior cause. Besides, it is evident from the works of God that he is an *intelligent* being. But intelligence is an attribute, not of matter, but of spirit. It follows, therefore, that God is a spirit.

5. God is an *omnipresent being*. This may be proved, first, from his *necessary existence*. A necessary existence, like necessary truths, is not confined to time or space. As a necessary truth is true everywhere, so a necessary existence must be everywhere. The necessity from which God exists is as great in all places as it is in any place. It is *universal—omnipresent*. Hence God is an omnipresent being.

The same is proved, secondly, from the *works* of God. No being can directly act where he does not exist. But the agency of God—the Creator, the Upholder, and Disposer of all things—is needed, and is felt throughout the universe. Hence he must exist throughout the universe, or—which is the same—is omnipresent.

We are not to conceive of the omnipresence of God, however, as a *universal, material extension;* so that a part of him is in one place and a part in another: for, being a spirit, God is not divisible into parts. Besides, something more than a part of God is needed here, and everywhere, for the performance of divine works. The presence of *God*—not a part of God—is needed on the earth, and needed in heaven, and needed in every place throughout the universe. In short, the omnipresence of God is a *spiritual* and not a material omnipresence, the fact of which we know, but the manner of which we may not be able to understand or explain. It is a perfect mystery.

6. God is *omnipotent.* As much as this is implied in the idea which we have of him as the great originating cause. If he is the first cause of all things, he has literally *power over all;* which is but saying that he is omnipotent.

The omnipotence of God is also manifest in his *works.* No greater power can be conceived of as possible than that which God has exhibited in creating, sustaining, and governing the universe. The being who can do what God has actually done, and is doing, can do everything possible,—everything which does not imply an absurdity—a contradiction.

7. God is *omniscient.* This is evident, first from his omnipresence. As God is everywhere present, an intelligent spirit, it would seem that he must know everything. What can be hidden from such a being? What can escape the notice of his eye?

His works also show that his knowledge is infinite. What greater knowledge can be conceived of as possible, than that which he has exhibited in the operations of his hand?

Besides, God must be supposed to know himself, and to know all his works; and this is to know everything.

8. God is infinite in *wisdom.* I use "wisdom" here in a purely *intellectual* sense, having no respect to moral character. And in this sense, infinite wisdom is but a modification of omniscience. It is omniscience exercised, put forth, in the discerning of ends, and the adapting of means for their accomplishment. And certainly, he who can adapt means to ends, as we see them adapted in the world around us; he who can form such deep and boundless plans, and set on foot the appropriate agents for their accomplishment; he who can arrange, establish, and carry forward, in ceaseless harmony, the entire order of the universe, —he must be infinitely wise. What wisdom can be conceived of higher, greater, more perfect than this?

9. God is a *free moral agent.* As much as this may be inferred from what has been already said. If he possesses almighty power, then he must have the power of action. Without this, what could power do, or what would it be? And God's omnipotence being associated with intelligence,

omniscience, infinite wisdom, he must have the power of *moral* action. In other words, he is a moral agent.

His works also indicate most clearly *design*, *plan*, *preference*, *choice*, and proclaim their author to be an *active* being. And if God is an agent at all, certainly he is a *free agent*. Who or what has power to control or limit him, or prevent his accomplishing what is good in his sight?

10. God is an *infinitely holy being*. As he is a free moral agent, he must possess a moral character. He must be either holy or sinful. And whatever may be his moral qualities, they must be possessed in the highest possible degree. The question, then, is one (so far as it can be a question) of the greatest interest, *What is the moral character of God?* Is he infinitely benevolent, or infinitely malevolent; infinitely holy, or infinitely sinful?

That God is holy, and not sinful, is evident, first, from what we know of the laws of moral agency, and of the natures of holiness and sin. The motives to holy action are always intrinsically stronger than those in favor of sin. This results from the very natures of holiness and sin. And with these stronger motives in favor of holiness, God, as an omniscient being, must be perfectly acquainted. He cannot possibly be blinded or deceived. He must perceive the motives, one way and the other, *just as they are*, and must be in a situation to give them their exact relative weight and influence. May we not infer, therefore, from what we know of the laws of moral action, that the intrinsically stronger motive will always prevail with him; that he is, and will be, forever holy?

Again: it may be inferred from the benevolence manifested in the works of God, that he is himself a benevolent or holy being. His works display, not only his wisdom, but his *goodness*. They are all calculated, except so far as they have been perverted by sin, to promote the happiness, and not the misery, of his creatures. The return of the seasons; the constant succession of day and night; the adaptation of creatures to the circumstances in which they are placed; the provision made for the supply of their wants, and in supplying them for the pro-

motion of their happiness,—these and a thousand other things, go to show that the God of nature is benevolent or holy.

The holiness of God may also be proved from the holiness of *his law*. I refer not here to that law written in the Bible, but to the law written on the heart of every human being. That there is such a law, and that it is holy,—or, to speak more literally, that all men have a natural consciousness of the right, and of their obligations to follow it,—I hardly need stop to prove. Every man has a witness to the truth of this statement in his own breast. But if God has imprinted his law on the very hearts of his intelligent creatures, and if it is a holy law, how is the inference to be resisted that he is himself a holy being?

This argument may be presented in a somewhat different light. God has so constituted us that we not only perceive the difference between right and wrong, but, in conscience, we approve the right and detest the wrong. We cannot help it. We cannot help despising and detesting the wrong-doer, if we would. Now, would God have so constituted us if he were himself a wrong-doer? Would he have so constituted us, and all other intelligent creatures, if he were not himself a *right-doer*, or—which is the same—if he were not a holy being?

The holiness of God may also be shown from the holiness of *the Bible*. In a former Lecture I proved the existence of God from the existence of the Bible; considering the Bible as an *effect* which, like every other, must have an adequate cause. I now argue from the character of this effect to the character of its cause. No reader of the Bible can doubt that it is a holy book; that it inculcates holiness and discountenances and condemns all sin. Its obvious and actual tendencies are to promote holiness in the earth. But, if such are the character and tendencies of the Bible, then what shall we say as to the character of its Author? Must he not be a holy being?

The holiness of God, which has now been demonstrated, includes all his moral perfections. If he is holy, then is he benevolent and good, just and merciful, true and faithful; for these are but particular branches or forms of holiness. If God is perfectly holy, then his holy character combines in perfection every form of moral excellence.

It has been objected to the moral perfection of God that he has suffered so much sin and misery to exist under his government. If God has permitted the existence of sin, because he *loves* it, or *approves* of it, this would be inconsistent with his moral perfection. Or if he has permitted it, because he *could not prevent it* in a moral system, this would conflict with his natural perfections. But, suppose God to have permitted the existence of sin because (hateful as it is in itself, and much as he hates it) he sees that he can overrule its existence for a greater amount of good in the end. It is not incumbent on me here to show that such actually *is* the reason why sin is permitted; but *suppose it to be so.* Suppose the great plan of providence, which God has adopted and is carrying into effect, and which we know involves, to a certain extent, the existence of sin and misery—suppose it to be the best plan possible on the whole. Manifestly, on this ground, the existence of sin and misery involves nothing against the moral perfection of God.

So far from it, their existence is demanded by the highest moral perfection—by the purest benevolence. If the existing plan of providence *is*, on the whole, the best one possible, notwithstanding it involves, to a certain extent, the existence of sin and misery, then God *ought*, in all goodness, to have adopted it. And, having adopted it, he ought to carry it into effect. Nor is this doing evil that good may come; for, so far as God is concerned, it is not doing evil at all. All that God does in the matter is good, and only good. All is done from motives of the purest benevolence.

11. God is a perfectly *happy* being. In the possession of those attributes which have been ascribed to him, he has infinite sources of blessedness within himself. He is happy in the contemplation of his own amiable and perfect character; happy in the possession and gratification of all holy affections; happy in the consciousness of having formed, in eternity, the best conceivable plan of operation; and happy in seeing this great and glorious plan going into complete effect. No enemy can ever thwart or defeat any part of his wise and holy purposes. No enemy can prevent the ultimate accomplishment of the greatest possible good. No enemy can tarnish the glory or mar the

felicity of the Supreme Being in the smallest degree. So far from this, the very wrath of enemies will be made to contribute to his praise, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain.

It has been objected to the perfect happiness of God, that the many evils existing under his government must, in their very nature, be *painful* to him. How can he behold them, as he is constrained to do, and not be *pained to the heart?* But as, on the theory we adopt, the evils which exist are but *incidental* evils,—incidental in some way to the best possible system, and which are to be overruled in the end for the greatest good,—so the pains which God feels in view of them are but *incidental pains*—incidental in some way to his highest happiness. So far from diminishing his happiness on the whole, God could not, on the theory we adopt, be perfectly happy were any other system of things adopted than that which he has chosen, and which his providence is carrying into effect.

12. God is *immutable*. He is immutable as to his *substance* and *the mode of his existence*. As he exists from an inherent and eternal necessity, without depending on anything out of himself, nothing ever had, or can have the least influence upon him, to change his substance or the mode of his existence.

God is immutable, also, in all his *perfections;* immutably omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent; immutably wise and holy, just and merciful, true and faithful, good and happy. The perfections of God belong to his very nature. Without them he could not be God. They are as unchangeable, therefore, as his existence.

Again: God is immutable in his *purposes*. We often change our purposes. Something new, unanticipated, comes up, which makes it necessary to change them. But the eternal purposes and plans of God undergo no change. They were formed from the beginning, in view of all possible contingencies,—in view of everything which could ever take place. Consequently, nothing unforeseen can come up to change one of the purposes of God, and none of them will ever be changed.

If it be asked whether God is in such a sense immutable as to have *no succession* in his mind, I feel constrained to answer this question in the negative. I think him immutable in every

respect which does not imply imperfection. But, to suppose him immutable in such a sense that he can have no succession of views or exercises, no feelings, no affections, no aversions, preferences, or acts,—this *would* imply imperfection. It would be inconsistent with his doing anything, or possessing any moral character whatever. It would render him more like the sleeping Brumha of the Hindoos than like the God of nature and the Bible.

There is a real difference between the *actual* existence of things and their merely *purposed* and *foreseen* existence; and changes from the latter of these states to the former are of continual occurrence. Ten thousand things which existed only in the divine purpose yesterday, have come into actual existence to-day. These perpetual changes God not only causes, but *perceives*. He *must* perceive them, if he views things truly,—views things as they really are. And the perception of them, as they occur (although not bringing into notice anything new, unforeseen, unanticipated), yet constitutes a perpetual succession of views. At the same time, if God is unchangeably perfect, his moral exercises and feelings must be so modified as to correspond to this continual change of views. To illustrate the matter, we will suppose a sinner to have been converted this morning. Now, God does not view this person to-day as he did yesterday. Nor does he feel towards him to-day as he did yesterday. To suppose that he did, would imply imperfection. The day preceding Paul's conversion, God saw him a virulent persecutor, "breathing out threatening and slaughter against the saints"; and he felt towards him as he ought to feel, Paul being possessed of such a character. The day after Paul's conversion God saw him a very different person, and he had very different feelings in regard to him. This illustrates what is meant by a *succession* in the divine mind; not that anything new or unanticipated comes up to the view of God, but that there is a constant succession in his views and exercises, corresponding to the perpetual flow of changes which is going on in his presence and under his hand throughout the universe.

It follows from what has been said that God is (what he was represented to be at the commencement of these Lectures) liter-

ally a *person*. There are some in these days, calling themselves Christians, and even Christian ministers, who deny the *personality* of God. God is not a person, but rather a *personification* of the powers, processes, and laws of nature. It is not too much to say of such characters, by whatever name they may choose to be called, that they are, in fact, atheists. They believe in a figurative, and not a literal God,—a figure of speech, and not a reality. No atheist ever denied that there were established powers and laws of nature; and those who personify these and call them God, are not less atheists than others who prefer to speak out their infidelity in more literal terms.

The great God of nature, of whose existence and perfections we have essayed to treat, is a *literal, substantial being*—a *person*. He is not to be identified with the powers and laws of nature;—powers which himself wields, laws which he has himself established. The attributes we have ascribed to him are all personal attributes, and prove him to be an all-wise, all-holy, all-powerful, perfect, and glorious person.

I conclude this discussion by saying that *God is one*. The unity of God is not, as some have asserted, among the most obvious of nature's teachings; and yet it is plainly enough indicated in the book of nature, as well as in the brighter volume of inspiration. It is not easy to see how two or more beings, possessing such attributes as have been ascribed to God, could exist in the universe together. If one fills all immensity with his presence, what room is to be found for another? If one alone is able to perform everything, and if his agency is actually concerned in all that takes place, what is there left for another to do?

The *unity of design*, so manifest in all the works of God, seems also to indicate the unity of his being. And if it be said that these are not necessarily the works of one being, but may as well be ascribed to several perfectly harmonious beings, it is enough to reply that only one God is needed. *One* great First Cause, such as has been described, is enough to account for all the phenomena; and it certainly would be unreasonable and superfluous to suppose the existence of more Gods than one, when one alone is necessary.

I have now finished all that I propose at present to offer in regard to the existence and attributes of God, as discoverable by the light of nature. And notwithstanding all the difficulties of the subject, what a wonderful and glorious being has been presented to our view! Existing from eternity, and from a necessity of his own nature, with all other beings and things dependent on him, and he dependent on nothing out of himself,—omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; immutable in all his perfections and attributes; infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth,—who would not love and honor such a being? Who would not adore, and fear, and worship before him? Who would not deem it a blessing to be his creature, to live under his government, and to obey his laws? Who would not unite with the hosts of heaven in singing: "*Thou are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created?*"

LECTURE IV.

NEED OF A REVELATION.

We have been investigating the evidence of the divine existence and perfections, or what is usually called *natural religion*, from the light of reason and nature. There are those who tell us that this is enough. "The book of nature," they say, "is ever open; its teachings are clear and ample; and we need no more." Without depreciating at all the clearness or the importance of that light which shines forth from the works of God, I shall endeavor to show, in what follows, that we do stand in need of *additional light*. The light of divine revelation is *needful* for us, and should be thankfully accepted by us.

When we insist, however, upon the necessity of a revelation, we must not be understood to say that the light of nature would be insufficient, were *the best possible use made of it*, to guide a soul to heaven. It would be sufficient, undoubtedly, for an *innocent, unfallen* soul. Such an one might come to the knowledge of God; might love him, serve him, and be prepared to enjoy him here and hereafter, without any supernatural revelation. The same, too, may be said, perhaps, in regard to a *fallen, guilty soul*. By making the best possible use of the teachings of nature, such an one might come to the knowledge of God and his law; might see his sins, and repent of them; and might cast himself upon divine mercy; though he could know nothing, for the time, of the particular method in which the divine mercy was to be exercised towards him. He might have the *element* of faith in Christ, without the form of it. In other words, he might have that which would be faith in Christ, so soon as he came where Christ was, or came to the knowledge of him; in which case, I suppose, he would be saved by him. I can

conceive of such a character as a *pious heathen*,—a heathen reconciled to God, and prepared essentially for heaven. Whether there have been any such characters, and, if so, how many, I pretend not to say. I hope there have been some; and the opposite of this is not implied in anything I am about to say as to our need of divine revelation.

I have spoken here of what *might be done*, in heathen lands, on supposition the best possible use was made of the light and the teachings of nature. But *is* the best possible use made of these teachings? Has it ever been? Is it likely to be? Is not the light of nature everywhere perverted and abused? And, to prevent us all from perishing together, do we not need more and stronger light,—a light shining down upon us directly from heaven?

1. A revelation from God is needed to make us acquainted with many *new and important truths*,—truths in regard to which the teachings of nature afford no light at all. Such, for example, are the peculiar mode of the divine existence,—three persons in one God; the appropriate manner of worshipping the Supreme Being; the introduction of sin; the gift of the Saviour; the doctrine of atonement by his death; the descent and work of the Holy Spirit; the provisions and ordinances of the gospel; the resurrection of the body; the general judgment; with the endless awards and retributions which are to follow it. Now, these are all of them important truths,—some of them vastly and vitally so. Yet they are subjects in regard to which nature's voice is dumb. She teaches nothing contrary to them, and nothing about them. They are purely subjects of revelation. And do we not need a revelation to enlighten us in regard to topics such as these? On subjects so essential to our spiritual and eternal welfare, to our happiness in this life and forever, how can we afford to live and die in ignorance and darkness?

2. We need a revelation, not only to make us acquainted with new truths, but to *republish* and *confirm* many things which are taught by the light of nature. Such are the being and perfections of God; the requisitions and sanctions of his law; the chief end and happiness of man; the immortality of the soul; and a future state of rewards and punishments. On

these points, and others connected with them, the teachings of nature are not, indeed, silent. She has a voice, and it should be heard. And yet her responses are so equivocal and uncertain; they are so far from being clear, full, and decisive; they possess so little of authority and influence, that in practice they do but little good. The wisest of the philosophers have been in doubt respecting them, and have not been guided in their conduct by them. Thus Socrates, when about to die, tells his friends: "I *hope* I am now going to good men, though this I would not take upon me positively to affirm." And Cicero, having spoken of the several opinions which had been entertained concerning the nature and duration of the soul, says: "Which of these is true, God only knows; and which is the most probable, is a very great question." Cicero also introduces one of his philosophical companions as saying, "When I read the arguments for the soul's immortality, I think I am convinced; but as soon as I lay the book aside, and begin to reason with myself, my conviction is gone." It was this which led Seneca to say, that "immortality, however desirable, was rather *promised* than *proved*" by those who had gone before him. The truth is, the more *obvious* of nature's teachings on the subject of religion — such as the being and perfections of God, the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments — all require to be republished and confirmed, and to have certainty, weight, and authority imparted to them by a revelation from heaven.

3. A revelation is needed to furnish an increase of *motive* to the performance of duty. Dim as the light of nature is, those who have no other light *know*, in general, much better than they *do;* and they will be condemned hereafter, not for their want of light, but for their abuse of it. They sin against the light they have. They break the law of God inscribed upon the heart, and do violence to their own convictions of duty. In short, the *motives* which the religion of nature presents, though sufficient to leave the heathen without excuse, are found practically to have but little influence. They need the more exciting and weighty motives of the gospel to restrain and subdue the

power of sin, and, by the divine blessing, to become the means of their salvation.

These several positions, as to our need of divine revelation, are all of them confirmed, and more than confirmed, in the melancholy history of the heathen nations.

1. The *religions* of the heathen have always been, and are now, a miserable compound of falsehood, superstition, and corruption. In proof of this I need only refer to the character of their divinities, the nature of their worship, and the cruelties and immoralities everywhere perpetrated, not in contradiction of their religious theories, but under their sanction. Among the *ancient* heathen, temples and altars were erected to all the passions, diseases, fears, and evils to which mankind are subject, and rites were offered corresponding to the characters of their divinities. Some of these were vindictive and sanguinary; others were jealous, wrathful, and deceptive; while all were adulterous and obscene. Not a few of them were monsters of wickedness, whose worship, of course, was absurd, licentious, and cruel. Prostitution was systematically annexed to many of the old pagan temples, and constituted a principal source o their revenue. Other impurities and cruelties were practised in them, at the very thought of which the human mind revolts.

Nor are the religions of *modern* heathen nations at all better than those of the ancient. In Asia and Africa, in the wilds of America and the islands of the sea, the most degrading divinities are worshipped, and with every form of obscenity and cruelty. In consequence of the labors of missionaries, this subject is much better understood than it was only a few years ago; and every ray of light which has been shed upon it serves only to reveal the grossness of its enormities. Not a missionary paper or journal is published, touching the religious rites of the heathen nations, which is not a standing testimony to their need of a revelation from heaven.

2. The *philosophy* of the heathen has been much of it worse than nothing, and none of it has been at all effectual in promoting their moral and spiritual good. The Epicurean philosophy, by making pleasure the great end of life, held out not only

a license, but encouragement, to every species of immorality. The philosophy of the Stoics—which was a rigid fatalism—was little if at all better. The Pyrrhonics were universal skeptics, denying the very existence of truth. Plato, in his Republic, recommends a community of wives and of children, and thinks it right that maimed and imperfect children should be put to death. Aristippus maintained that it was "lawful for a wise man to steal, or to commit adultery or sacrilege, when opportunity offered; since none of these actions are naturally evil, and are so regarded only by silly and illiterate people." Seneca pleads for suicide in the following terms: "If thy mind be melancholy and in misery, thou mayest soon put a period to thy wretched condition. Wherever thou lookest, there is an end to it. Seest thou that precipice? there thou mayest have liberty. Seest thou that sea, that river, that well? liberty is at the bottom of it. Seest thou that little tree? freedom hangs upon it. Thine own neck, thine own throat, may be a refuge to thee from such bondage; and so may every vein in thy body."

The teachings of the ancient philosophers were not all of them, indeed, of the character above described; but their best speculations were doubtful and discordant, lacking motive and authority to exert a good influence either upon themselves or their pupils. Their instructions, also, were given in private, or to a select few, and were not expected to benefit the people generally. Concerning these they gave themselves no trouble, regarding them as little better than brute beasts. In short, the wisest of the heathen philosophers deplored their want of light, and despaired of seeing the world reformed until they were favored with a teacher from heaven.

3. The *morals* of the heathen ever have been, and are now, deplorable. We infer that it *must* have been so, from what has been already said. With their religions, their teachers, their customs, their laws, how could they be otherwise than degraded and corrupt? No people can be expected to be much better than their gods. But certainly if the heathen, in general, were not better than their gods, their characters must have been exceedingly defective.

But as to the actual state of morals among the heathen in

ancient times, the world is full of evidence. Every command of the decalogue, every principle of true morality, were openly and shamelessly violated. Debauchery and uncleanness in their most revolting forms, profaneness, theft, lying, infanticide, suicide, war, slavery, cannibalism, and almost every other kind of wickedness and cruelty prevailed. No man ever had a better opportunity of knowing the character of the ancient heathen than the Apostle Paul; and the description which he has given of it, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, is strictly applicable to the heathen now: "Filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." Need anything more be said to show that characters such as these require something beyond the mere teachings of nature in order to their reformation and salvation?

4. But we need not go to the heathen alone to show the inefficacy of nature's light. The characters of modern infidels, with few exceptions, prove the same. Infidelity first appeared in England in the seventeenth century. From thence it spread into France, Germany, and other parts of the Christian world. And now, what have been the characters of most of these leading infidels? The morals of Rochester, during his infidel life, were too grossly vile to need any comment. Woolston was a bold blasphemer. Blount solicited his sister-in-law to marry him, and being refused, he put an end to his life. Tindall was originally a Protestant, then a Papist, and then a Protestant again, merely to suit his own convenience. At the same time he was infamous for his vices, and for his total want of moral principle. He is said to have died with this prayer on his lips: "If there is a God, I desire that he may have mercy on me." Hobbes wrote his Leviathan to serve the cause of Charles I.; but when Charles fell, he turned it to the defence of Cromwell, and made a merit of it to the Protector. All this he afterwards confessed to Lord Clarendon. Morgan was a liar and a hypocrite. He professed himself a Christian in those very writings in which he

labored to destroy Christianity. Voltaire, in a letter still extant, requested his friend D'Alembert to tell for him a downright lie, in denying that he was the author of the Philosophical Dictionary; and D'Alembert in his answer informed him that he had done it. Rosseau was a gross profligate, who alternately professed and abjured the Roman and the Protestant religions, without believing either. He died in the act of uttering a notorious falsehood to his Maker. The characters of the French infidels, in the time of the first revolution, were degraded and brutal beyond description. Having publicly discarded God and Christ, and enthroned the goddess of reason in the person of a vile prostitute, they proceeded to turn their whole land into a brothel, and to deluge it with blood.

It should be remembered, too, in this connection, that neither the heathen in ancient times, nor modern infidels, have been wholly unblest by the light of revelation. Some of the best things in the writings of the old philosophers may be traced either to their acquaintance with the Jewish Scriptures, or through tradition to the revelations made originally to man; while some of the more respectable of modern infidels would have been very different characters from what they were had it not been for the restraints of Christian society and a religious education; and their writings would have been very different (if indeed they had written at all) had it not been for the instructions and good influences of the Bible.

But if a revelation from heaven is so necessary to man, why, it may be asked, has it been confined to so small a portion of our race? Why has it not been given to all men? These are fair questions, and they are entitled to a fair and full answer. I reply, therefore, —

1. God has given to all men more light than they improve. The condemnation of the heathen will be grounded, not on their want of light, but their abuse of it. God has given to all men light enough, if improved in the best possible manner, to guide them to heaven. These points have been made clear in the foregoing discussion. Hence—

2. God was under no obligations, in point of justice, to give to any of the human family additional light. He might make a

revelation, in his mercy, if he pleased; or, if such was not his pleasure, he might, without any impeachment, leave his erring creatures to their own chosen way. Hence—

3. If God is pleased to make a revelation to only a part of mankind, the others have no reason to complain. They still have more light than they improve; and light enough, if improved in the best manner, to guide them to heaven.

But these replies to the objection above stated, though in themselves sufficient, are not those on which I would chiefly rely. I remark, therefore, —

4. God did, at the first, reveal himself to *all men*, and to *all alike*. The revelations which were made to our first parents, and to their immediate descendants, were a common gift. They were imparted and intended for the benefit of the race. And then, at the repeopling of the world by Noah, God again revealed himself to all alike. He revealed himself not only to the posterity of Shem, but also to the immediate descendants of Ham and Japhet. The proper question, therefore, is not, Why has not God given his revelations to all men? but, Why have his revelations, to so great an extent, been disregarded and lost? They *were* originally made to all; but vast portions of our corrupted family, because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, have lost them, and sunk into heathenish darkness and ignorance.

And after the knowledge of the true God was lost, except in the family of Abraham, what pains were taken (if I may be allowed such an expression) to extend this important knowledge to the surrounding nations! For this purpose, Abraham was sent into Canaan, and the Israelites into Egypt, and Jonah to Nineveh, and the Jews to Babylon. Prophecies were uttered and fulfilled, miracles were wrought, and divine judgments were inflicted, that, as the Scriptures express it, "all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, and might fear his name forever" (Josh. iv. 24).

And almost two thousand years ago, Christ left it in solemn injunction to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Surely, then, whoever else may be to blame that the revelations of God are not more

widely diffused, *he* is abundantly clear in this matter. No reasonable objection can be sustained against him.

I conclude with a single remark. If a revelation from God is so needful for us, as we have seen, then we should regard with gratitude and favor the evidences in support of the divine authority and inspiration of the Bible. Among all the pretended revelations now before the world, the Christian Scriptures alone present claims that are at all worthy of consideration. If the Bible is not from God, then no revelation has been made from God to men. We are literally shut up to this conclusion. It is this, or nothing. Now, this consideration should not lead us to accept the Bible without examination; but it should lead us to look favorably into its evidences; to search them with diligence and candor; and, if their validity and sufficiency can be made to appear, to accept the needed blessing with all thankfulness, and give diligent heed to it as to a light in a dark place.

LECTURE V.

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE.

The word *canon*, signifying *rule*, is appropriately applied to the Sacred Scriptures, because these constitute *the rule of faith and life* to the believer. The canonical Scriptures include those inspired books which go to constitute the *entire canon* or *rule*. Our present object will be to ascertain, if possible, what these canonical books are, and to distinguish them from certain other books, which are termed *apocryphal*.

Let it be premised here, that the questions on which we now enter belong appropriately to *Christians*. Until the infidel will admit that there *are inspired books*, and thus virtually ceases from his infidelity, he can have no particular interest in the inquiry, *what* and *how many* inspired books there are.

We begin with the canon of the Old Testament. This was not settled at once, as its books were not all written at once. The books of Moses were written first; and these, when finished, were carefully deposited in the side of the ark of the covenant, in the most holy place (Deut. xxxi. 24–26). It seems that the book of Joshua was annexed to the Pentateuch, and laid up with it; for it is said that "Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God" (Josh. xxiv. 26). When other books were added by Samuel and his successors, it is likely that their inspired authors would be careful to deposit copies of them in the sanctuary. In the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, these sacred autographs, in all probability, perished, although copies of them were in circulation among the priests and people, and were preserved.

After the return from Babylon, the sacred books were collated, edited, and published in a volume, under the direction

of Ezra, an inspired priest. To him, therefore, more than to any other individual, belongs the honor of settling the canon of the Old Testament.

Some parts of the Old Testament, however, were added subsequent to the days of Ezra. This was true of the prophecy of Malachi, of the books of Nehemiah and Esther, and of at least some part of the books of Chronicles. In the book of Nehemiah, mention is made of the high priest Jaddua, and of Darius Codomanus, king of Persia, both of whom lived a century after the time of Ezra (Neh. xii. 22). Also in the third chapter of the first book of Chronicles, the genealogy of the descendants of Zerubbabel is carried down, perhaps to the time of Alexander the Great. The conclusion, therefore, is, that Ezra collected and arranged all the sacred books which belonged to the canon before his time; and that after him, a succession of pious and learned men — some of them inspired men — continued to pay attention to the canon, until the whole was completed.

Such is the probable history of the canon of the Old Testament. Two questions now arise in view of it; and they are the only questions which, as Christians, we are entitled to ask. First, did the Old Testament, as it existed in the days of our Saviour, receive his sanction? Was it regarded by him as the Word of God? Secondly, did the Old Testament, which our Saviour received and sanctioned, contain the same books with ours?

That our Saviour received and sanctioned what he usually called *the Scriptures*, regarding them as the Word of God, and as of binding authority, no reader of the Gospels can possibly doubt. It was these out of which he reasoned ; to these he constantly appealed; it was these which he opened and explained to his followers; it was by these that he silenced and confounded his adversaries. "The Scriptures," he said, "cannot be broken." "The Scriptures must be fulfilled." "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life." "Blessed are they that hear *the Word of God*, and keep it." Our Saviour speaks of the sacred writings, with which he was familiar, under the threefold division of "the law, the prophets, and the psalms," and says that all things written in them concerning him must

be fulfilled (Luke xxiv. 44). It is a fact, then, that our Saviour *did sanction*, in the most explicit terms, a class of writings held sacred among the Jews, speaking of them as the *Word of God*, and declaring that all things written in them must be fulfilled.

We come now to our second question — Were the Scriptures which the Saviour thus confirmed and sanctioned, the same as our Old Testament? In other words, did his Old Testament and ours agree? Were the books the same? If it can be shown that they were the same, I insist that, as Christians, we have no more questions to ask. Our Saviour sanctioned the canon, as *he* had it; and he equally gives his sanction to ours, if it can be shown that his and ours agree.

That the books of the Old Testament are the same now that they were in the days of Christ and the apostles, will be evident from the following considerations:

1. The Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, which was made long before the birth of Christ, contains all the present canonical books. Certain apocryphal writings have since been bound up with the Septuagint, but there is no reason to think that they made any part of it in the days of our Saviour.

2. Josephus, who was contemporary with some of the apostles, gives an account of the sacred books of the Jews in his time; and it is evident from his description of them, that they were the same as ours. He speaks, indeed, of but twenty-two books; but this is to be accounted for from a device of the rabbins to make the number of books correspond exactly with the number of Hebrew letters. To effect this purpose, they joined together several of the books; as Judges and Ruth, Ezra and Nehemiah, Jeremiah and the Lamentations, and all the minor prophets. Josephus gives the following account of the authors and contents of the several books: "Five of them proceed from Moses. These include the laws, and an account of the creation of man, extending to the time of Moses' death,— a period of almost three thousand years. From the death of Moses to that of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, the prophets who succeeded Moses committed to writing, in thirteen books, what was done in their day. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and instructions

of life for man."[1] It will be seen that this division of the books corresponds precisely to that mentioned by our Saviour, — "the laws, the prophets, and the psalms." It agrees also with the Old Testament of the present day.

3. Several of the Christian Fathers, as Melito, Origen, Athanasius, Cyril, Augustine, Jerome, and Ruffin, furnish catalogues of the books of the Old Testament; and although there are slight variations in these catalogues, it is certain from them that the canon was settled in those early times, and has undergone no alteration since.

4. Since the time of Christ, the Jews and Christians have been spies upon each other; so that if either party were disposed to disturb the canon of the Old Testament, it would be impossible to effect it without instant exposure.

From all these considerations we may be sure that the Old Testament is the same now that it was in the time of Christ; and since he received and sanctioned it, as it *then was*, we have his sanction for it as it *now is*. And this, as I have said, is enough for Christians. We cannot be in fault, in holding and regarding the Old Testament Scriptures as they were regarded by our blessed Lord.

This argument is not only conclusive upon Christians, but it is *comprehensive*. It settles the authority, not only of the Old Testament as a whole, but of each and every book comprised in that whole. We have no occasion now to prove the canonical authority of any particular book, as, for example, the Canticles, or the book of Esther, any further than to show that it belonged to the canon in the time of Christ, and as such received his divine approval.

In connection with our English Bibles, we frequently find a class of *apocryphal books;* and the question arises, Why are not these of canonical authority? Why should they not be received by us, as they are by the Church of Rome? In reply to this I observe :

1. That these books are not found in the Hebrew Bible. They were written originally, not in Hebrew, but in Greek, — a language which was not common among the Jews, perhaps

[1] Against Apion, Book i. sect. 8.

not known among them, until long after the canon of the Old Testament was closed.

2. These apocryphal books have never been received into the sacred canon of the Jews. They are ancient Jewish writings, but have never been regarded by that people as inspired. In this the ancient and modern Jews are agreed.

3. The apocryphal books are never quoted or referred to in the New Testament as possessing any divine authority. Indeed, it does not appear that they are quoted at all.

4. These books were not received as canonical by the Christian Fathers, but were expressly declared to be apocryphal. In the various catalogues of the Fathers, mention is made of all the received books of the Old Testament, while either nothing is said of the apocryphal books, or they are referred to as having no authority. Indeed, until the time of the Council of Trent, near the middle of the sixteenth century, the most learned and judicious popish writers adhere to the opinion of the ancient Fathers, and declare against the canonical authority of the apocryphal books. It was by the Council of Trent that these books were first adopted and canonized in the Roman Church. But—

5. If there was no other argument against the apocryphal books, the internal evidence would be decisive. They contain many things which are fabulous, absurd, and incredible. They inculcate false doctrine, and a false and unchristian morality. In the second of the Maccabees we read: "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins" (chap. xii. 43, 45). The writer of the same book justifies and commends suicide: "When he was ready to be taken, he fell upon his own sword, choosing to die nobly, rather than fall into the hands of the wicked" (chap. xiv. 41, 42). In several places in the Apocrypha, atonement and justification are represented as being secured by works. "Whoso honoreth his father, maketh an atonement for his sins" (Ecc. iii. 3): "Alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin" (Tobit xii. 9).

6. The writer of the Maccabees disclaims inspiration,—at least such inspiration as would preserve him from error. "I will here make an end of my narrative. If I have done well,

it is what I desired; *but if slenderly and meanly, it is what I could attain unto*" (2 Mac. xv. 38).

In judging of these apocryphal books, I would award them all the praise to which they can be regarded as entitled. They possess a high value, considered as ancient Jewish writings, which not only throw light upon the phraseology of Scripture, and upon the history and manners of the East, but exhibit the state of the Jewish nation at a very interesting and critical period of its history. Still, they have no claim to be admitted into the sacred canon, or to be regarded as of divine authority. The English liturgy (very improperly, as it seems to me) enjoins the reading of certain portions of these books in the churches, and it is on this account, probably, that we so often find them enclosed within the covers of our Bibles.

We come now to consider the canon of the New Testament. This, like that of the Old, seems not to have been settled at once. The Apostle Peter was acquainted with the Epistles of Paul, and places them on a level with "the other scriptures;" that is, with the scriptures of the Old Testament (2 Pet. iii. 16). Eusebius tells us that John was acquainted with the other three Gospels, gave them his approbation, and wrote his own as a supplement to them, which accords entirely with the contents of John's Gospel.[1] This Gospel is, in fact, a supplement to the other three, whether so designed by the writer or not. In all probability, John was acquainted with most of the other books of the New Testament, as their authority seems to have been established soon after his death. Their authority was not established, however (as infidels have pretended), by any decree of council, or by any formal act of the whole church, but by the testimony of competent witnesses, and by the various evidences presented in behalf of the received books, that they really were the works of inspired men, and carried with them the authority of God. The Council of Laodicea, which assembled A. D. 364, and by which it has been pretended that the canon of the New Testament was established, and that, too, by one majority, neither did, nor attempted, any such thing. The canon was just as well settled before that council, and had been for more than a

[1] Ecc. Hist. Lib. iii. cap. 24.

hundred years, as it was afterwards. This council do, indeed, publish a catalogue of received books — such as had been received, and were expected to be; but their decree was not so much legislative as *declaratory*, setting forth what was, and had been, the sense of the church in regard to this important matter.

In settling the canon of the New Testament, the early Fathers of the church seem to have proceeded with great deliberation and care. They did not receive everything that was thrown out upon the world under the name of apostolical men. The claims of every book were canvassed, and nothing was admitted but upon the fullest investigation. It was owing to this circumstance that doubts were, for a time, entertained with regard to some of the received books; as, for example, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the second Epistle of Peter, the two short Epistles of John, and the Revelation. We know *why* doubts were entertained respecting these books, and *how* they were removed. We have the means of judging in regard to this matter, almost as well as the Fathers themselves, so careful were they to put us in possession of all material facts pertaining to the subject.

The general considerations which go to satisfy us as to the canonical authority of the received books of the New Testament, are the following:

1. The catalogues of the early Fathers,— as Origen, Eusebius, and others,— in which are found the names of most, or all, of these books.

2. These books are continually *quoted* in the writings of the Fathers, and quoted as of divine authority.

3. The books of which we speak *were read* in the primitive churches, as constituting a part of the inspired Word of God.

4. The books of the New Testament were early *translated* into other languages, particularly the Syriac and the Latin, in which versions the books agree substantially with our own.

5. In addition to this mass of evidence in favor of the books of the New Testament collectively, we have an abundance of testimony, in the writings of the Fathers, to each and every book in particular. We are told which books are of unquestioned authority, and which not; and in regard to those whose authority

was for a time doubted, we are told where these doubts were entertained, and by whom, and of the fact that all doubt was at length removed, and the authority of the books established.

In settling, as they were called to do, the canon of the New Testament, the early Fathers and churches seem to have proceeded on the following sound and reasonable principles:

1. They would admit such books, and such only, as could be proved to have been written by the apostles themselves, or by their immediate attendants, and under their inspection. Thus the gospels of Mark and Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles, were received into the canon, because, though not written by apostles, they were written by their attendants (the attendants of Peter and Paul), and undoubtedly received their sanction.

2. Regard was also had to the *contents* of the books received. Anything occurring in a particular book, which was contrary to what the apostles taught, or to the rules which they established, would be deemed a sufficient reason for rejecting the book.

3. In deciding upon the claims of a book, *authority* and *example* were allowed to have due influence. With those who had not opportunity of personal knowledge and examination as to the evidence for or against any particular book, the judgment and practice of other churches and individuals had (as it should have had) much weight.

It was on principles such as these, and after much care and deliberation, that the canon of the New Testament was finally settled. It was settled during the first half of the second century, within fifty years of the death of the Apostle John.

During the first four centuries of the Christian era, many *spurious books* were thrown out upon the world, bearing the names of apostles, or of apostolical men, and claiming to possess a divine authority. A portion of these has been published in a volume, under the title of "Apocryphal Books of the New Testament." But the evidence against them, or such of them as lay any claim to divine inspiration, is conclusive.

1. They are not acknowledged or quoted, as of any authority, by the early Christian Fathers. Indeed, the most of them are not quoted at all, as they had no existence before the third century.

2. They are not quoted by the earliest enemies of Christianity, as they certainly would have been had they been extant, and been generally received by Christians.

3. These apocryphal books contradict, in many points, the doctrine and practice of the apostles.

4. Things are often mentioned or referred to in them which occurred much later than the time in which the books purport to have been written.

5. They contain direct contradictions of authentic history, both sacred and profane.

6. The style and manner of the apocryphal books is exceedingly diverse from, and inferior to, that of the apostolical writings.

7. These books contain many things ludicrous, frivolous, and absurd, and in not a few instances, palpable falsehoods. Thus, in one of the pretended epistles of Seneca to Paul, the Emperor Nero is said to have been surprised and delighted with Paul's epistles to the churches.

In addition to the apocryphal writings, a pretence has been confidently made to *traditionary revelations*. Such a pretence was set up by the Pharisees in the days of our Saviour. Such an one is also made by the Roman Church at this day. With regard to the traditions of the Pharisees, it is enough to say that they were expressly abrogated and condemned by Christ himself (Mark vii. 8–12). And for the same reasons that our Saviour rejected the traditions of the Pharisees, he would certainly reject those of the Romanists. It may be said of the latter, as truly as of the former, that they contradict and make void the law of God by their traditions.

The inquiry is pertinent here, whether any book belonging to the canon of Scripture, or properly entitled to belong to it, has ever been lost. On this question I have two remarks to offer:

1. If any of these books have been lost, their loss does not detract from the value or the authority of those which remain. If any have been lost out of the canon, let us prize the more highly, and receive with the greater thankfulness, those which are left. But —

2. There is no sufficient reason for supposing that any of the

canonical books of Scripture have been lost. We can hardly reconcile it with our ideas of the wisdom and the goodness of God, that he should suffer such an event to take place; nor is it likely that he has. Mention is indeed made in the Old Testament of certain books which are no longer extant, such as "The book of Jasher" (Josh. x. 14) and "The book of the Wars of the Lord" (Numb. xxi. 14). But there is no evidence that either of these was ever included in the Jewish canon, or was entitled to be there. And the same remark may be made respecting "The book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel," so often referred to in the first book of the Kings. This was not the book of Chronicles which we have in our Bibles, but the authorized records of the kingdom of Israel, made and kept by the king's scribes. It was the register of what we would call the Secretary of State. The three thousand proverbs of Solomon, and his songs, which were one thousand and five, together with his works on botany and natural history, would, no doubt, be very entertaining, if we had authentic copies of them; but there is no evidence that these works ever claimed inspiration, or were admitted into the sacred canon of the Jews.

The only books of the New Testament which have been accounted as lost, are an Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, supposed to precede what we are accustomed to regard as his first epistle, and his Epistle to the Laodiceans. (See Col. iv. 16.) But the epistle of which Paul speaks in 1 Cor. v. 9, was undoubtedly the very epistle which he was then writing. The passage is badly translated in our version. Ἔγραφα ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ; not "I wrote unto you in *an* epistle," but "I have written unto you in *the* epistle;" that is, in *this* epistle, — the very writing which I now send.

The Epistle to the Laodiceans has been justly regarded as no other than the Epistle to the Ephesians. As Ephesus was the chief city of proconsular Asia, this epistle may have been designed for all the churches in the province; among which was the church of the Laodiceans. This is the only supposition which is not embarrassed with formidable difficulties. There was, indeed, an Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans extant in the

fifth century; but it was manifestly a forgery, and never had a place in the sacred canon.

It is objected by Romanists, when told that the canonical Scriptures are *the only rule of faith*, that we receive these Scriptures on the authority of *the church;* and, consequently, the authority of the church must be at least paramount to that of Scripture. But in what sense can it be said that we receive our Scriptures on the authority of the church? Did the whole church ever come together in a body, or in a general council, and decide, authoritatively, what books should be received, and what rejected? This has been often said by infidels; and, that after long and angry debate, the decision was made in favor of the received books by a majority of one. But when and where was this general council held? Where was this most important ecclesiastical action had? I answer, *nowhere.* The whole story is a fabrication. Some small councils, as late as the third or fourth centuries, did record in their minutes what books *were* received in the churches, without pretending to any authority to legislate in the case.

As before remarked, we judge of the claims of our sacred books, according to the *evidence*, external and internal, in their favor; just as we would in respect to any other ancient writings. We receive them not at all on the *authority of the church*, in any such sense as the Romanists pretend.

In order to make good his objection, the Romanist must show two things: First, that the whole primitive church was Roman Catholic, and, secondly, that by some general and decisive action of the whole primitive church, the canon of Scripture was settled. But neither of these points can he ever prove, for neither has the shadow of truth in its favor.

LECTURE VI.

AUTHENTICITY OR GENUINENESS OF SCRIPTURE.

Having established the canonical authority of those books, and those only, which go to constitute our Bible, I proceed next to inquire as to their *authenticity* or *genuineness*. I use these words in much the same sense, as being opposed to that which is *spurious* or counterfeit. The questions to be considered are such as these: *Were the several books of Scripture written at the times and places which have been commonly supposed? Are they the genuine productions of those men whose names they bear, and to whom, in general, they have been attributed?*

The subject opened by these questions, it will be seen, is a wide one,— wide enough to occupy volumes. All I shall attempt will be to present some general considerations, going to show the authenticity or genuineness of our sacred writings.

1. There is no real evidence *against* their authenticity. There are certain marks by which critics are accustomed to detect spurious writings, and by which, in ordinary cases, they may be easily and surely detected. For example, says Michaelis, "We think we have reason to hesitate about the authenticity of a work, when serious doubts have been raised, from its first appearance, whether it proceeded from the author to whom it is ascribed; when the immediate friends of the alleged author, who were best able to decide upon the subject, denied it to be his; when a long series of years has elapsed, after his death, in which the book was unknown, and in which it must unavoidably have been referred to had it been in existence; when the style is different from that of his other works, or, if none remain, from what might have been reasonably expected; when events are recorded, or referred to, which happened later than the time of the supposed author; when opin-

ions are advanced which are contrary to those which he is known to have received; when, in short, the whole is incongruous to the reputed author, and to the age and country in which he lived."

Now, it is remarkable that not one of these marks of spuriousness — so reasonable in themselves — is applicable to our sacred books. So far from this, the opposite is specifically true of them in nearly every instance; a circumstance which, of itself, goes far toward establishing their authenticity.

There are, indeed, passages in some of our sacred books, particularly in those ascribed to Moses, which Moses could not have written, but must have been added by Samuel, or Ezra, or some other editor or transcriber.[1] But this is no evidence that Moses was not properly *the author* of the books. Who doubts that Homer was the author of the poems which bear his name? And yet it is indubitable that they have undergone some changes since they came from his hand.

2. We have stronger reasons for believing in the authenticity of our sacred books than we have for holding the same opinion with regard to any other ancient books or writings. Let the evidence be collected in favor of the authenticity of any of the distinguished works of the ancients; for example, the Orations of Cicero, or the Odes of Horace, or the Æneid of Virgil; and I will undertake to present stronger evidence in support of the authenticity of almost any of our sacred books.

To begin with the books of the New Testament. We certainly know, from a great variety of historical evidence, that these books were in existence near the time when they purport to have been written. They are not only referred to, but expressly spoken of, and largely quoted, by the writers of that period. We know, too, that they were then attributed, both by friends and enemies, and have all along been attributed, to the individuals whose names they bear.

The books of the Old Testament were certainly in existence when those of the New were written, and had been for ages previous. They had been collected into a volume, and translated

[1] Compare Gen. xiv. 14 with Jud. xviii. 29. See Gen. xxxvi. 31; Ex. xvi. 35, 36; Deut. iii. 14.

into Greek, more than two centuries before the birth of Christ. At the time of their translation, they were regarded as very ancient writings. The primitive Christians received these books from the Jews, all of whom, both ancient and modern, unite in ascribing them to those holy and venerable men to whom they are now respectively attributed.

The early Christians had the best opportunities for testing the authenticity of the books they received. We know, too, that they were exceedingly cautious in this matter, looking well into the evidence of things, sifting it to the bottom, doubting where doubts could be reasonably entertained, and rejecting whatever was found to lack sufficient proof; and it should seem that the grounds on which they satisfied themselves ought to be sufficient to satisfy us.

On the whole, I have no doubt that we have stronger proof of the authenticity of our sacred books than we have of the authenticity of perhaps any other sacred writings. And if the Jesuit Harduin was deservedly scouted, who denied the authenticity of the Greek and Roman classics, ascribing them to the monks of the middle ages, much more should modern infidels be scouted, who call in question the authenticity of the Old and New Testaments.

3. If our sacred books are not the productions of those whose names they bear, then they are *forgeries*. But forged when? And by whom? Who can give any probable, or even plausible, answer to either of these questions?

And if these books *were* forged, how are we to account for their original reception? Would the Jews, for example, have received their laws, purporting to have been given by Moses, from any hand but that of Moses? Or would the primitive Christians have received their sacred books from any other hands than those of the apostles and evangelists? They promptly rejected everything which was attempted to be palmed upon them from other hands; and they would have rejected the books of the New Testament, had they not been fully satisfied as to their genuineness.

Besides: it is evident that the sacred writers were *good men*. They were, so far as we can gather, *holy men;* and the tendency

of their writings is to discountenance all sin, and to promote holiness of heart and life. But if the books are not authentic, then the writers were forgers, imposters, liars. And we are presented with the strange anomaly of good forgers! virtuous impostors! holy liars! And with the anomaly of books, the whole tendency of which is to discountenance and condemn every species of deception, which, at the same time, are the productions of the most arrant deceivers!

4. In proof of the authenticity of our sacred books, we have the testimony of ancient *heathens* and *heretics*. Among the ancient heathen, who wrote against Christianity, and whose writings have, in part, come down to us, were Celsus, a philosopher of the second century, and Porphyry of the third, and the Emperor Julian, once a professed Christian, but afterwards a bitter opposer of the truth. Celsus, who wrote within sixty years of the apostolic age, so far from denying the authenticity of the Gospels, insists that they *are* authentic,— the works of the personal friends and followers of the Nazarene; and he undertakes to refute the Christians out of their own acknowledged books. He quotes freely from all parts of the Bible, speaking of it as a collection of writings which the Christians of that day regarded as of the highest authority.[1] The same may be said of Porphyry and Julian; though we know less of the character of their writings, as fewer fragments of them remain. The infidels of that day had no thought of denying the authenticity of our sacred books. They rather assumed their authenticity, and argued from it in opposition to their truth.

The church was early infested with heretics, who denied the doctrines of the gospel, and were interested to get rid of those parts of Scripture in which these doctrines are most plainly inculcated. Such were Cerinthus, the Ebionites, and Nazarenes. These all denied the apostleship of Paul, and rejected his epistles as constituting any part of Sacred Scripture. Still, they did not doubt the authenticity of these epistles. They admitted that Paul wrote them with his own hand. In the same way, and for the same reason, they rejected the Gospels of Mark, Luke, and John; receiving only a corrupted copy of the Gospel

[1] See Lit. and Theol. Review, Vol. iv. pp. 218, 584.

of Matthew. Still, they did not deny the authenticity of the three rejected Gospels, but discarded them on other grounds. They disliked their contents, and could not well bring them into a conformity with their views.

5. The *style* of our sacred books may be justly appealed to as evidence of their authenticity. It is suited, in every case, to the age and circumstances of the reputed writer. The style of Moses is just what we might expect from Moses. The style of the prophets, who wrote during the captivity, and after it, is different, but equally characteristic. We have here, as we might expect, an infusion of foreign words. The style of the Gospels — Greek, with Hebrew and Syriac idioms — proves that they must have been written by Jews, and written within the first century after Christ. They could not well have been written, in their peculiar style and manner, either earlier or later. The style of Paul is very peculiar; and yet it is just such a style as a person educated after the manner of Paul, and possessing his peculiar temperament, and pursuing the course of life he did, might be expected to employ. And the same may be said of the style of John. This is so very peculiar as to fasten upon him the authorship of all those scriptures which bear his name.

The characteristic *differences* of style among the writers of our sacred books prove, to a certainty, that they were not the work of one person, but of many; so that if they are forgeries, we must suppose a long succession of forgers, all strangely agreeing in one design, — a design most unaccountable for such persons to propose, or to be agreed in.

The style, too, we insist, is not one which an impostor would be likely to assume. There is a frankness, an openness, a straightforwardness about it, which a company of deceivers could not well counterfeit. There is a running out into the mention of numerous incidental things, which an impostor would not care or dare to notice.

6. The authenticity of our sacred books is established by their frequent and accurate *allusions* to contemporaneous events. The allusion in the books of Moses to various historical events proves that these books must have been written about the time

of Moses. The knowledge of a later writer would not have been sufficiently minute and accurate. And the same may be said of the allusions, generally, in the other books of the Bible. These are numerous, particular, evidently undesigned, and yet (so far as can be gathered from other sources) entirely accurate.[1] Modern investigations, instead of invalidating, are continually going to confirm the accuracy of the Scripture allusions.

7. The different books of Scripture go to confirm the authenticity one of another. For example, it is claimed that the Old Testament preceded in point of time, and by a long space, the New. And is it not perfectly evident, from a comparison of the two parts of the Bible, that this was the case? How often do the writers of the New Testament refer to the Old, speaking of it, and quoting from it, as a collection of ancient writings which were regarded as of the highest authority! How often are the rights and institutions of the Old Testament remarked upon and explained in the New, in a way to render it perfectly certain that the former must have long preceded the latter!

Again: it is claimed that the books of Moses were the first written of any part of the Old Testament; and that these books were in existence *long* anterior to the most of those which followed. And who, that reads attentively the several parts of the Old Testament, can doubt as to the truth of this? To mention but a single example: The allusions all through the Old Testament (excepting the Pentateuch) to the different parts of the Jewish law, and more especially to the ritual parts, are so frequent, and so manifestly incidental, as to prove that the law must have been in existence, and in binding force, when the other books were written.

Still again: it is claimed that a part of the prophets were contemporary with the kings of Judah and Israel; that others wrote during the captivity; and still others after the captivity. Now let any intelligent, fair-minded person compare the historical and prophetical books, to see whether the incidental statements and allusions, one way and the other, go to confirm, or to invalidate, this claim; and we are sure he can come to but one conclusion. He will see and say that Isaiah and Hezekiah,

[1] See Horne's Introduction, Vol. i. Sec. 2.

that Jeremiah and Zedekiah, that Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar, that Haggai and Zerubbabel, must have lived and flourished together.

I mention but another example, and that from the New Testament. It is claimed that the same Paul whose history is given in the Acts, is the author of the epistles which bear his name; and that most of these epistles were written while this history was in progress. We are entitled, therefore, to compare the Acts and the epistles, and see if this claim is founded in truth. This work, I hardly need say, has been done to our hand, by Dr. Paley, in his admirable little work, entitled Horæ Paulinæ. And no candid person can read that book and not be satisfied. In short, a close comparison of the different parts of the Bible will not fail to convince any person that they are mutually consistent, and that they establish the authenticity one of another.

8. The evidence in favor of the authenticity of the Scriptures is continually increasing. And this, if it be true, is certainly a very interesting fact. As there is nothing in the Bible to flatter the pride of man, or inflate his vanity, or gratify his sensual indulgence, or give him security in a course of sin, but all its instructions are of a directly opposite tendency, it need not surprise us that, with mankind generally, the Bible is a dreaded and a hated book. For almost two thousand years it has been a prime object with wicked men, by sneers and reproaches, by exciting suspicions and creating doubts, if possible to get rid of the Bible. And yet all this while it has been spread fearlessly open before the world, inviting its scrutiny, inviting research; and I but speak the sentiment of the best scholars of the age, when I say that the evidences of its authenticity, so far from being invalidated, have been constantly gaining strength. The more the state, the history, the customs, arts, and languages of the ancient world are studied; the more the ancient manuscripts, versions, and quotations are examined; the more the monuments and inscriptions of remote antiquity are brought to light, the more evident it becomes that the several books of Scripture have been ascribed to the right authors, and that they must have been written at the remote periods, and in the places, which have been commonly supposed. Difficulties which once

embarrassed the subject have been removed, objections have been obviated, and the force of the argument in support of the authenticity or genuineness of the Scriptures is continually gaining strength.

9. I only add, further, that if the books of the Bible are true, they certainly are authentic. To prove that they *are* true, will be my object in a future Lecture. All I here say is, that their truth, if it can be established, necessarily involves their authenticity; because the Scriptures settle, in most instances, the question of authorship, and fix the times and places of the writing of the books. Thus it is repeatedly said that Moses wrote the books of the law; and that Joshua wrote the book which bears his name; that David wrote most of the Psalms, and Solomon the Proverbs, and the Prophets the books ascribed to them; and Paul, and Peter, and James, and Jude, wrote their several epistles. Now, if the Scriptures are true, these declarations are true, and the question of authorship is settled.

On the whole, Christians have much reason to be satisfied as to the authenticity or genuineness of the several books of the Bible. And this, it will be seen in the progress of the discussion, is an important step in the general question of *evidences* which go to establish the fact of a divine, supernatural revelation to the world.

LECTURE VII.

UNCORRUPTEDNESS OF SCRIPTURE.

I ENDEAVORED to show in my last Lecture that the several books of Scripture have been ascribed to the *right authors*, or that they are the genuine productions of those whose names they bear. It may be said, perhaps, that, allowing this to be true, still it does not follow that we are in possession of the real, original Scriptures. "They are ancient writings. They have come down to us through a long track of years, and through the hands of numerous transcribers. Through the dishonesty or incompetency of some of these, the books may have been essentially corrupted. By mistake or design, passages may have been added or omitted, till the Scriptures are no longer what they once were. They may have been essentially changed."

In reply to this, it is admitted that the books of Scripture have passed through the hands of many transcribers; in consequence of which it is scarcely possible that there should not be slight variations. In *printing* successive editions of the Bible, it is not easy to avoid, entirely, mistakes and errors. But the difficulty of this was greatly increased in ancient times, when copies could be multiplied only through the slow efforts of the pen.

I shall not undertake to show, therefore, that there are not various readings in the Bible; that all the copies are just alike, and just as they were originally written. There certainly *are* various readings, and these are found to be considerably numerous. Nothing short of a constant miracle of superintendence could have prevented it. Still, I shall endeavor to show that a vast majority of these variations — indeed, almost the whole of them — are of very little importance, so far as concerns the

sense; that the Scriptures have not been essentially corrupted; that, in all material points, we have them as God originally gave them to the world. It will be understood, of course, that we here speak of the Scriptures in the original languages, and as they stand in our commonly received editions. In approaching this subject, I observe —

1. That no proof has ever been furnished, or can be, of essential alterations in the contents of our sacred books. It is easy for those who are skeptically inclined to throw out suspicions and insinuations. It is easy to say, in general terms, that the Scriptures *may* have been essentially corrupted. But the world is not so much interested to know what may, or may not, have been done in this matter, as to know what actually *has been* done. Where is the proof of essential alterations? Here is the Bible thrown wide open. Here are the hundreds and thousands of different copies, manuscripts, and versions. Let those who insist that the Scriptures have been mutilated and corrupted look into the matter for themselves. Let them investigate it to the bottom, and spread out the facts before the world. The burden of proof is on their hands, and let them produce it. We have no fears as to the result of careful and thorough investigation. Certainly, no proof has ever yet been furnished of essential alterations; and it is equally certain that none can be.

2. It is next to impossible that the Scriptures should have been essentially altered at any period, from the time of Moses to this day. The ancient Jews had the strongest motives for preserving their Scriptures uncorrupt. To say nothing of the veneration which they entertained for them, here were the articles of their religious faith, and the laws of the land. Here were the original land titles to their earthly estates, and the charter of their heavenly inheritance. To mutilate and corrupt these sacred documents, even if they could do it, would be to unsettle everything, in respect both to this life and that which is to come.

Besides: there were from the first different tribes in Israel, all alike interested, who would be sure to exercise a watchful care over each other. At a later period there were the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. And when the kingdom of

Israel was subverted, there sprang up different sects among the Jews. These all professed to receive the Old Testament Scriptures, or certain parts of them, and would be sure to guard with vigilance the sacred text. After the introduction of Christianity, the difficulty of any general corruption was still further increased. If the Jew made any considerable alteration, the Christian would discover it; or, if the Christian attempted to do the same, the Jew would be sure to detect and expose him.

Another difficulty in the way of any considerable alteration arose from the multiplication and wide diffusion of copies. It is supposed that the priests and Levites had copies of the law as early as the times of the Judges and the Kings; since they were expressly required to instruct the people, and read to them the law on great public occasions (Deut. xxxi. 11). At a later period, after the dispersion of the Jews and the establishment of synagogues, copies of the Old Testament Scriptures were greatly multiplied.

And the same may be said as to copies of the New Testament. With the early and rapid diffusion of Christianity, these were translated into different languages, and carried into all parts of the earth. In view of these facts, we ask, How could the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments ever have been essentially corrupted? To get all the copies together and mutilate all alike would be impossible; and if only a few copies were altered, all the rest would remain unchanged, to bear a united testimony against them.

3. We have another argument, *à priori*, to show that the Scriptures cannot have been essentially altered, growing out of the *exceeding care* which has been taken, both by Jews and Christians, in regard to them. The Jewish copyists were at some periods, excessively, I had almost said superstitiously, exact. They noted the verses where something was supposed to be forgotten, the words which they believed to be changed, and the letters which they regarded as superfluous. They ascertained the middle letter of the Pentateuch, the middle clause and letter of each book, and how many times each letter of the alphabet occurs in all the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus Aleph, they tell us, occurs 42,377 times; Beth, 32,218 times,

etc. I mention these facts to show the excessive care and particularity of these ancient copyists, and how unlikely it is that any considerable change could occur under their hands.

The same kind of care was not, indeed, exercised by the early Christians; and yet they were, perhaps, equally studious and watchful. Origen, Jerome, and others of the Christian Fathers, gave much attention to the sacred text, and were unwearied in their efforts to preserve and present it pure. The Hexapla of Origen, in which six different versions of the Old Testament Scriptures were presented together, in separate columns, on the same page, was a monument, not only of his learning, but of his zeal and faithfulness in this important matter. But I need not dwell longer on *à priori* considerations. I remark, therefore—

4. That this whole subject has been very thoroughly and satisfactorily investigated, and the number and character of the various readings in our sacred books have been carefully noted. Not content to wait for the enemies of the Bible to prove that it *has been* essentially corrupted, its friends have volunteered to prove a negative. They have shown, beyond all question, that it has *not* been corrupted. The more elaborate collators of the manuscripts of the Old Testament in modern times have been Kennicott and De Rossi. Dr. Kennicott examined six hundred and fifteen manuscripts; and in addition to these, De Rossi collated seven hundred and thirty-one more,—making thirteen hundred and forty-six in all.

The principal collators of the New Testament have been Erasmus, the editors of the Complutensian and London Polyglots, Bishop Fell, Dr. Mill, Küster, Bengel, Wetstein, Griesbach, Matthæi, and Schols. Griesbach examined three hundred and fifty-five manuscripts, besides ancient versions and quotations from the Fathers. In addition to these, Dr. Schols collated three hundred and thirty-one manuscripts; making, with those before examined, six hundred and eighty-six.

These statements show the exceeding diligence of distinguished Christian scholars in this important field of study and labor. The number of variations that have been discovered is, indeed, as might have been expected, very considerable. Some tell us of thirty thousand various readings; and others of a still

larger number. But then a vast majority of these — ninety-nine out of every hundred — are of no kind of importance, so far as concerns the sense. They respect merely a point, or a letter, or the spelling or collocation of some little word. Of how much importance would it be in this sentence, "Honour the Lord with thy substance," whether the *u* were omitted or retained in the last syllable of the word *honor?* Yet this, we are assured, would be quite as important as ninety-nine hundredths of the variations which have been discovered in the sacred text.

When Kennicott had finished his great work of collating Hebrew manuscripts, he was asked by his sovereign, George III., what had been the result of his learned and laborious investigations. He replied that he had "found many variations, and some grammatical errors; but *not one which affected, in the smallest degree, any article of faith or practice.*"

The integrity as well as authenticity of the sacred text received strong confirmation from manuscripts which the late Dr. Buchanan brought with him from the East, in the early part of the present century. Among these was a Hebrew copy of the Pentateuch, found among the black Jews on the coast of Malabar; and a copy of the entire New Testament (with the exception of the Apocalypse) derived from the Syrian Christians on the same coast. Neither of these had been transcribed from any Western copy of the Scriptures, or had any connection whatever with the European churches. They came originally, to be sure, from the same divine source; but they had passed down the stream of time in quite another channel. And yet, on examination, they were found to be, substantially, the same thing, — the same book, and the same contents.

I have said that a large majority of the various readings found in the Scriptures make little or no alteration in the sense. This, however, is not the case with them all. There are a few changes, here and there, which seem to have been perpetrated by design, which were intended to affect the sense. Thus in Mark xiii. 32, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father;" the words "neither the Son" are in some copies omitted. In Acts xx. 28, "Feed the church of God, which he

hath purchased with his own blood;" for the word *God*, some manuscripts read *Lord*. Another passage supposed to have been tampered with is 1 Tim. iii. 16: "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." In some copies this reads, "Great is the mystery of godliness; *he* who was manifest in the flesh was justified in the Spirit," etc.

Then there is the passage of the three heavenly witnesses, in 1 John v. 7. In most of the ancient manuscripts this whole verse is omitted, and it really is a doubtful passage. The external evidence is against it; though the internal has always seemed to me to predominate in its favor. I do not abandon the passage, but wait for further light. As at present informed, I should not feel justified in preaching from it, or in using it as a proof-text.

It will be seen that the variations here noted all relate to the same general subject, — the trinity and the proper divinity of Christ. They were perpetrated, probably, during the Arian controversy, in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era. I feel quite satisfied with the common reading of all the passages cited, except the last.

There are a few passages in the Bible, like those above noticed, which seem to have been tampered with, at some period, by design. And yet there are but few — *very few*. Christians may well be satisfied, not only with the authenticity, but the *integrity* of the sacred text. In all important particulars, we have received it, as the sacred writers left it, without corruption or alteration.

LECTURE VIII.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

My sole object in this Lecture is to prove that *the statements, the declarations of Scripture, are true.*

1. My first argument for the truth of Scripture will be drawn from the fact — already established — of their *authenticity*. Authentic histories, written and published under the same circumstances with our Scriptures, may in general be presumed to contain the truth; because, being circulated among contemporaries who are well acquainted with the facts, if the statements are not true they can easily be confuted, and certainly will not be received.

Moses published among his contemporaries an account of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and of their journeyings, their rebellions, and *corrections* in the wilderness. Would he have dared, under these circumstances, to publish statements which were not true, and which he might be sure, thousands of voices would instantly be raised to contradict? Or if Moses had had the effrontery to publish falsehoods to his contemporaries, would they have had the stupidity to receive them?

So the writers of the Gospels published among their contemporaries, friends, and enemies, distinct accounts of the doctrines, the works, the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Would they have published, under such circumstances, what they knew was not true; what every reader would at once say was not true; and what their enemies, the Jews, would instantly seize upon and turn to the ruin of their cause? Or, if they could have been so infatuated as to make such publications, would those around them have been so infatuated as to receive, read, and believe their books?

Moses often appeals to the *senses* of those for whom he wrote. "Your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord, which he did" (Deut. xi. 7). The writers of the New Testament do the same. Now, admitting (what has been proved) the *authenticity* of these writings, could they possibly have been received if they had not been true? Would not those into whose hands the writings first came have known whether their eyes had seen the things described? And if they had not seen them, would they have received and believed the books?

There is another difficulty in the way of the reception of these books on any other supposition than that of their containing incontestable truth. I refer to the character of the statements, the representations which are there made. These are, many of them, so mortifying to human pride, so offensive and humiliating to those to whom they were addressed, that they never would have been propagated or received if they had not been known to be true. What Israelite would ever have recorded such stories as those of Abraham's equivocation, Jacob's intrigue, Judah's incest, Aaron's calf, and David's adultery, had he not been constrained to it by the known fact that these things were true? Or, if any one had been mad enough to publish untruths of this nature in the presence of contemporaneous witnesses, would they not have been instantly rejected, and the authors of them have been contemned and scorned? How often are the Israelites reproved, reproached, denounced, and condemned, in different parts of the Old Testament, for their wickedness! Now, would these same Israelites have received this Old Testament, and clung to it even unto death, had they not been fully convinced that it was true?

The same reasoning may be applied to the humbling representations and doctrines of the New Testament. If these representations are true, and if those to whom they were first published knew they were true, then may we account for their being received. But on any other supposition, their reception is unaccountable.

2. My second argument for the truth of Scripture will be drawn from the testimony of the *early enemies of Christianity*. Most of the leading facts recorded in the New Testament are

confirmed by Josephus, by the Talmuds, by Tacitus and Pliny, and by various ancient heathen authors. The testimony of Josephus, who was a Jew, and a contemporary with the apostles, is as follows: "About this time lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed we may call him a man; for he performed marvellous things. He was an instructor of such as embraced the truth with pleasure. He made many converts, both among the Jews and Greeks. He was (by profession) Christ. And when Pilate, on the accusation of the principal men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who before entertained a respect for him continued still to do so, for he appeared to them alive again, on the third day; the divine prophets having declared these and many other wonderful things concerning him. The sect of Christians, so named from him, subsist to this very time."[1] In this passage, Josephus, a professed and an earnest believer of the Jews' religion, testifies that Jesus lived at the very time assigned to him by the sacred writers; that he was a wise and wonderful man; that he performed many miracles, and had many followers; that he was crucified under Pilate, and on the third day rose from the dead, according to the predictions of the prophets; and that the sect of Christians, so named from him, remained long after their Master was taken from them.

This passage from Josephus has been disputed, though, I think, without sufficient reason. But in other passages, which have never been disputed, Josephus speaks of the character and labors of John the Baptist; of his being put to death by Herod; of the martyrdom of the Apostle James; and of the miseries which came upon the Jewish nation on this account. "These things happened unto them by way of revenging the death of James the Just, the brother of Jesus whom they call Christ; for the Jews slew him, though a very just man."[2]

About the year of our Lord 65, commenced the terrible persecution of the Christians at Rome, under Nero. This monster of wickedness, having set fire to Rome just for the sake of seeing it burn, and wishing to avert the indignation of the people on that account, falsely charged the conflagration upon the Chris-

[1] Antiq., Book 18, Chap. iii.

[2] See Antiq., Book 18, Chap. v., and Book 20, Chap. ix.

tians, and commenced putting them to death without measure or mercy. Tacitus, a contemporary historian, and a heathen, thus speaks of the Christians: "Christ, the founder of this sect, was executed in the reign of Tiberius, by the procurator, Pontius Pilate. The pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, burst forth again, not only in Judea, the birthplace of the evil, but at Rome also, where everything atrocious and base centres and is in repute." In this passage Tacitus bears witness to the fact that Jesus lived in Judea at the very time stated by the evangelists; that he was put to death under Pontius Pilate; and that, after his death, his followers became exceedingly numerous, not only in Judea, but at Rome. Further on in the same passage he speaks of "a vast multitude of Christians" as having been cruelly tortured and put to death by Nero.

About forty years after this (A. D. 105) there was a persecution under the emperor Trajan. Pliny was at this time governor of Bythinia; and such multitudes of Christians were brought before him for trial and punishment, that he knew not what to do with them, and wrote to the emperor for advice. His letter is too long to be inserted here; but in it he describes the religion of the Christians, their meetings, their sacraments, their mode of worship, and bears testimony to their holy and blameless lives. He speaks of having put two Christian females to the torture; "but nothing," says he, "could I collect from them, except a depraved and excessive superstition." Here, you see again, is the Christian religion, flourishing in great strength, and vast multitudes drawn to the profession of it, at the very commencement of the second century, or within seventy years after the death of Christ.

It was only about sixty years after this that Celsus wrote his work against Christianity, — the first that was ever written against it of which we have any knowledge, — in which, as was remarked in a former Lecture, he admits the authenticity of the Christian Scriptures, and most of the facts which they inculcate, and undertakes to refute the Christians out of their own books.

3. I now turn to another argument for the truth of Christianity; and this is drawn from *the testimony of the apostles and evangelists*. It was one of the objects for which the apostles

were appointed, to be *witnesses* to the world of what things they had seen and heard; and there can be no doubt that our faith as Christians rests very materially, though not wholly, on their testimony. It becomes us, therefore, to examine well their testimony, and see whether or not they are worthy to be believed.

There are circumstances under which the evidence of testimony is as conclusive as any moral evidence can be. There are laws to which, if the testimony in any given case conforms, we cannot reasonably withhold our faith. The laws of valid testimony to which I refer are such as these:

(1) There must be a competent number of witnesses.

(2) These witnesses must have had the capacity and the means of forming a correct judgment.

(3) They must be persons of unexceptionable moral character.

(4) They must be disinterested.

(5) Their testimony must be given in plain terms, and must be, on all essential points, a concurrent testimony.

(6) It must be of such a nature that the witnesses, if they have falsified, are open to detection.

(7) It must be, not contradicted, but (so far as might reasonably be expected) confirmed, by other evidence.

(8) It must be followed up, on the part of the witnesses, by a correspondent, consistent course of action.

Such are, in brief, the laws of valid testimony. Such are the conditions, the circumstances, under which the evidence of testimony becomes conclusive.

I would not say that these laws of testimony are all of them of equal value, or that a testimony which does not conform to them all is, of course, to be rejected. But I do say that testimony which does conform to them all is, in every case, to be received. It is sufficient of itself to establish *truth*. It is such as the world receives and acts upon, without the least hesitation, in regard to all subjects. In short, it is incontestable and conclusive, and cannot be set aside but upon principles which, so far as respects the wide field of testimony, would introduce a universal skepticism.

I am aware that I use strong language here, and I will illustrate the propriety of it by putting a strong case. The most

of us, probably, never saw the city of London. Still we do not doubt that there is, on the other side of the Atlantic, such a city, more than if we had seen it. The fact of its existence has become as certain to us, on the evidence of testimony, as though it rested on the evidence of sense. And now, if we reflect a moment, we shall perceive that the testimony on which we ground our faith as to the existence of London, conforms to each and all of the laws of testimony above laid down. We shall perceive, too, that this is the reason, and the *sole* reason, why our faith in the existence of London is so strong. If the testimony in the case were different; if it failed to conform to some one, two, or three of the laws of valid testimony; if, for example, the witnesses were few and incompetent, of bad character and deeply interested; if their testimony had not been confirmed, as might be expected, by other evidence, and they did not themselves act as though they believed it;— under these circumstances we might have our faith shaken even as to the existence of London. We might be constrained to disbelieve its existence altogether.

The way is now prepared to apply the principles which have been laid down to the case in hand; the testimony of the apostles and evangelists in support of Christianity. Does this testimony conform or not to the established laws of valid testimony?

In the first place, the witnesses to the truth of Christianity are sufficiently numerous. No one can doubt this. Then these witnesses had the best means of information, and were capable of forming an intelligent judgment in regard to the facts about which they testified. They were men living at the time, and on the ground. They were eye and ear witnesses of the things which they relate. Again: the writers of the Gospels, so far as we have the means of judging, were men of good moral character; and, instead of having any motive of worldly interest to induce them to fabricate a deception, and pass it off upon the world, every consideration of interest was impelling them the other way. The price of publishing the gospel message was to them the loss of all things; and they had every reason to expect beforehand that it would be so. Then the testimony of these men is given in the plainest and most explicit terms. And it is

throughout a concurrent testimony, — altogether consistent with itself. There are differences, indeed, in the gospel narratives. The witnesses do not all tell precisely the same story; nor could it be reasonably expected that they would. It would be a serious objection to them if they did; laying them open to the suspicion of connivance and deceit. Still, there are no contradictions. Their testimony, on the whole, is consistent and concurrent.

It should be further considered, that the story of these witnesses, if not true, admitted of a ready and easy contradiction. If, for example, Christ did not feed thousands of people with a few loaves and fishes; if he did not heal the sick, and raise the dead; if he was not tried, condemned, crucified, and buried; and if he did not rise from the dead on the third day, — how easy to have effectually refuted these stories when they were first published! Yet they were not refuted. They could not be. So far from this, they received confirmation from a thousand sources. And, to crown the whole, the original witnesses in this most important case lived and acted as though their testimony was true. They certainly knew whether it was true or not; and they proclaimed aloud, and everywhere, in their future lives, — in their toils and perils, their sacrifices and sufferings, and under the bloody hand of the executioner, — that it was true. They sealed their testimony, in most cases, with their blood.

I affirm, therefore, in concluding this argument, — and I feel authorized to do so with the utmost assurance, — that the testimony in support of the gospel history conforms to all the laws of valid testimony, and consequently is conclusive. Hence the gospel history — and with it, of course, the entire system of Christianity — is *true*. It is supported. Nor can it be overthrown but by adopting principles which would render it impossible to prove anything by testimony.

4. Another argument for the truth of Scripture may be drawn from *facts* actually existing before our eyes. There are many such facts, events, institutions, customs, rites, for the origin of which the sacred penmen furnish a rational account, but of which, if their statements are rejected, no account can possibly be given. One of these is *the creation of the world*. It may be

proved from other and independent sources that this world must have had a beginning; and that, in all probability, it began to exist, at least in its present organization, at no very remote period. Now, Moses gives us a rational account of the creation of the world, and of its being fitted up for the residence of man, and the only rational account that has ever been given. Reject what he has written, and we have nothing left us but conjectures and fables.

Another of the facts to which I refer is *the existence of sin and misery in the world.* This is a fact, but it is a strange fact, — one that has puzzled and perplexed the restless, inquisitive mind of man for thousands of years. Now, Moses tells us of the introduction of sin. He gives us a plain, common-sense account of the matter. And if his account be rejected, what other can possibly be substituted in its place?

Another fact to be noticed in this connection is the early and almost universal division of time into *weeks.* There are natural reasons why time should be divided into moons, or months, and into years. But there is no natural reason why it should be divided into weeks of seven days; and no rational account of this ancient and almost universal mode of dividing time can be given, if we reject that which is given by Moses.

It is evident, not only from universal tradition, but from appearances all around us, that this earth has been, perhaps more than once, *deluged with water.* Now, *when* was there such a deluge? *How* was it? *Why* was it? Moses has answered all these questions; and if we set aside his answer, who can give us any other?

Again: it is a fact that numerous *languages* are spoken in the world: and though the most of these are cognate dialects, and originated one from another; yet there are some *radically* and *originally* different languages. How came these different languages? How came the human race, which is manifestly one race, to be separated and sundered one from another in this way? Moses explains this matter to us; but reject his explanation, and who can give us any other?

A most singular mode of propitiating and worshipping the Deity prevailed all over the ancient world, and still prevails in

some parts of the earth;—I mean that of *bloody sacrifices*. The mere light of nature and reason would never have led to this mode of worship. What natural connection is there between the killing of an innocent lamb or dove, and the acceptable worship of the Most High? How, then, are we to account for this early, and for long ages universal, mode of divine worship? The Scriptures enable us to answer this question; but, exclude the light which they shed upon it, and I defy any person to make out even a plausible answer.

A most singular rite prevailed among several ancient nations, and still prevails, not only among the Jews, but in some heathen tribes;—I mean that of *circumcision*. No one can doubt the existence of such a rite; and yet I think any one would be exceedingly puzzled to account for its origin, after he had set aside the history of it given us by Moses.

I might go on to speak in the same way of the institution of the Sabbath, of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, of the existence of the Jews as a distinct people, and of the very existence of the Christian religion. These are all *facts*,—plain matters of fact, existing before our eyes,—and every reflecting, philosophical man should be able to give some rational account of them. How came one day in seven to be regarded as a sacred day, not only by Jews and Christians, but by most of the civilized nations of antiquity? How originated the rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper? The Jews still exist,—a singular, separate, peculiar people. How, when, where did they originate? And who gave them their peculiar religious notions and rites? These Christians, too,—which can be proved to have existed and to have spread themselves over the face of the earth for more than eighteen hundred years,—where did they come from? Who was their founder? Whence did they derive the peculiarities of their religion and worship? These are all of them fair questions,—questions arising from known and palpable facts; and what answers shall be given to them? With the Bible in our hands, it is easy to give satisfactory answers; but throw this away, and what answer that shall be so much as plausible can possibly be framed?

With regard to several of the institutions here referred to,

the argument is the more conclusive, because they are of a *commemorative* character. For instance, the Passover was instituted, and its institution recorded by Moses at the time, to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. Now, it is certain that no imposter of a later generation could have imposed this institution on the Israelites. Nor would they have received it at the hands of Moses if the facts which it commemorated had never taken place. The same may be said of the Feast of Pentecost, designed to commemorate the giving of the law; of the Feast of Tabernacles, commemorative of the Israelites dwelling in tents; of the Feast of Purim, which commemorated their deliverance from Haman; and of the Lord's Supper, which now commemorates the death of Christ. How could this ordinance of the Supper ever have been instituted, received, and observed, if that event had not taken place which it was designed to commemorate,—in other words, had not Christ suffered and died, according to the Scriptures? *We* have an annual festival on the fourth of July, to commemorate the declaration of American independence. Does any one suppose that this festival could ever have been got up, and brought into general notice and observance, if American independence had never been declared? No more could any of the commemorative institutions of the Bible have been got up and established, if the events commemorated by them had not occurred.

5. An argument for the truth of the Bible, of more weight than any other in the mind of the sincere, unlettered Christian, — an argument reaching not only to the facts of revelation, but to its *doctrines*,— grows out of his own *experience*. He may not have read books on the evidences of Christianity. He may not have acquainted himself with the historical arguments in favor of it at all. Still, he has no doubts as to the truth of the Bible; and when you inquire as to the reason of his confidence, he tells you, "I know the Bible is true, because I feel it to be true. I am sure of the truth of it, because it accords so exactly with my own experience." For example, the Scriptures represent the natural heart of man as *corrupt* and *sinful*. The Christian knows from his own experience that this is true. The Scriptures speak of a great moral change as necessary in order

to the possession of true religion. We must be born again; we must become new creatures in Christ Jesus. The Christian feels and hopes that he has experienced this change. Again: the Scriptures represent the Christian life on earth as one of *conflict*, of *warfare;* "the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." The Christian is conscious of this warfare in his own soul. The Scriptures describe, in various ways, the peculiar views and exercises of those who have been born of God, — their desires and fears, their joys and sorrows, their aspirations and their hopes. The Christian perceives that these answer to his own. And thus, as our Saviour expresses it, "he has the witness in himself." He cannot doubt the truth of the Bible. When such an one says, "I know the Bible to be true, because I feel it to be true," he urges a sound argument. He reasons logically and well.

Such an argument may not be satisfactory to the infidel; and yet I see no good reason why it should not be. For what has he to urge against it? He can only say to the Christian, "My feelings are not like yours. I have no such experience." Alas, my friend! we know you have not. The Bible itself asserts that you have not; so that in what you say you rather verify than contradict the representations of Scripture. But what does your lack of Christian experience prove? Does it prove that the experience of Christians, and the conscious agreement of their experience with the representations of Scripture, is not a reality? By no means. As well might the blind man deny the existence of light because he does not see it, or the deaf-mute that there is any such thing as sound because he does not hear it, as you deny the reality of Christian experience because you have never felt it, — have never tasted and seen that the Lord is good. Your Christian neighbor is an intelligent, moral, credible man. You believe him to be a pious man. He tells you that his own feelings, his own experience accord so entirely with the representations of Scripture, that he knows the latter must be true. Now, why will you not believe him? You would take his word on any other subject; why not on this? I only add —

6. That the arguments for the truth of divine revelation are

continually increasing, in numbers and in strength. It has been said that no system ever laid itself more completely open to detection, if it contained errors, than Christianity. "No book ever gave so many clues to discovery, if it tell untruths, as the sacred volume." And yet its leaves were thrown fearlessly open, from two to three thousand years ago, to the investigation of philosophers and critics, to the scrutiny of friends and foes. Its leaves have lain unfolded from that time to the present, inviting discussion, inviting research; saying virtually, like its great Author, "Testify against me if you can." And it has passed the ordeal. It has stood the test. Its evidences, so far from being weakened through the lapse of time, are continually gaining strength. The researches of the antiquary, the investigations of modern science, the accidental discoveries which from time to time are made, the unceasing inquiries of restless, inquisitive man, instead of fulfilling the predictions of the infidel, and refuting the evidence for the truth of Scripture, all tend manifestly to confirm and establish it. Passages of Scripture once dark have been brought into light: former objections have been obviated; seeming discrepancies have been reconciled. What were regarded as difficulties two hundred years ago, are found such no longer. The very efforts of infidels have been made to recoil on their own heads. They have been overruled for the establishment and advancement of the gospel. In proof of these statements, I need only refer to the recent confirmations of Scripture found in the mounds of Assyria and the catacombs of Egypt; also to the collateral support which its evidences are receiving from the discoveries in geology.

In short, the time has come when, if Christians have ever had any fears as to the truth of their religion, they should have them no longer. They may rest perfectly assured that they are without foundation. Christianity may yet be assailed; but it will come out of every new trial, as it has out of every previous one, strengthened in its evidences, and not weakened; victorious, and not vanquished.

I conclude with a single remark. If Christianity is true, then, to *us*, it is *the greatest of all truths*. If it is true at all, it is true in all its parts, — its doctrines, its precepts, its promises,

its threatenings, its warnings, its sanctions. It is true in its various bearings and far-reaching influences. It is truth deserving the most earnest attention, because it is truth immediately, and of all others most solemnly, interesting to mortals. It discloses to them what they *are*, and what they *must be;* what God has done for them, and what they must do for themselves in order to be saved. The Bible tells us of guilt — dreadful guilt. It tells also of judgment — awful judgment. It tells of a Deliverer, who saves all those that embrace and follow him, and who punishes all others with an aggravated condemnation. It shows us the great white throne, and the final Judge seated upon it, before whom the earth and the heavens flee away. It shows us the rising dead, the assembled worlds, the opened books, the final awards. It shows us heaven, and it shows us hell; and shows us what we must be and do, in order to escape the one and possess the other. Now, these are truths — and they *are* truths if the Bible is true — which, for solemn interest and impression, cast all others into shade. These are truths, on the heights of which the Christian may plant himself, and look far down upon mere questions of business, or of science, as manhood looks upon the baubles of infancy, or as angels may be supposed to look upon the trifling pursuits of men.

May I be permitted to inquire of you, my young brethren, Do you believe these truths? Do you feel and live as though you believed them? Does the appropriate fruit of them appear in your conversation and life? These are vitally important questions. On your ability to answer them as you could desire depends the present state, and, it may be, the final destiny of your souls.

LECTURE IX.

DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

THE divine authority of Scripture implies that God has made direct and supernatural revelations of his truth and will to men, and that these revelations are in the Bible. The Bible contains them. It is a record of them. Whether this is an *inspired* and *infallible* record we do not here say. That belongs to another subject. What we are now to prove is, that the Bible INCLUDES, EMBODIES God's revelations to the world, and consequently is of divine authority. And this we argue:

1. From the *truth* of Scripture. If the Bible is true, as we have before proved, it certainly is of divine authority; for the sacred writers *claimed* to deliver messages from God. Moses went to Pharaoh, and went to the Israelites, not in his own name, but in the name of God. He introduced all his messages with a *Thus saith the Lord.* The same did the inspired prophets. The same did the apostles. The same did our Saviour himself. "The words which I speak unto you are not mine, but *his that sent me.*" "Ye received the word which ye heard of us," says Paul, "not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, *the word of God*" (1 Thess. ii. 13). If the Bible is true, then these, and a thousand other like assertions, are true. They are as true as any other part of the Bible. And they establish this most important fact, that the Bible *is* a revelation from God, and carries with it a divine authority.

2. The divine authority of Scripture is fully attested by *miracles.* A miracle is something more than a strange thing, or to us an unaccountable thing. It is not certain that an event is miraculous because it is not in accordance with any law of nature with which we are acquainted. There may be natural laws of which, at present, we have no knowledge, with some one or more of which the seeming miracle may be at an agreement.

But suppose we see some *known* law of nature supervened, and an event taking place in direct *contradiction* to it. It is not merely above and beyond what we know of nature, but in direct *contravention* of what we know. Such an event is a proper miracle, *known* to be such; and, from the nature of the case, it is, and must be, a work of God. It involves a direct intervention of that Omnipotence by which the laws of nature were established, and which alone is able to suspend them.[1]

It will be objected, perhaps, that we are not enough acquainted with nature's laws to know when they are suspended. Of course we cannot decide, in any given case, whether the event is a miracle or not. But to this I reply, that, with all our short-sightedness and ignorance, we do know something in regard to the powers and laws of nature. We have, or may have, not presumption or conjecture, but *knowledge* here; else all philosophy is delusive, and every attempt at philosophical inquiry must be fruitless. But if we may know, to some extent, what the laws of nature are, then we may know when they are suspended or contravened. In other words, we may know and distinguish a palpable miracle from every other kind of event.

It may be objected, again, that what seems to *us* to contravene some known law of nature may be in accordance with some unknown and higher law, and so may not be a miracle after all. Are we to understand, then, that what we call the laws, the regular movements of nature, ever contravene each other? Do they run in diverse and opposite directions, crossing occasionally each other's track? But this would set nature in opposition to itself. It would represent its great movements as variant and contradictory, and expose them to meet in frequent conflict, and with tremendous crash—a supposition which no lover of nature can be willing to admit.

It may be objected to the idea which has been advanced that no being but God can perform a miracle, that the miracles of Scripture are sometimes ascribed to *devils*, and to *wicked men*. Thus Satan is said to have spoken with the tongue of a serpent, and deceived our first mother; and the magicians of Egypt

[1] The laws here spoken of are, of course, *physical* and not *moral* laws. To suppose the latter, would make every miracle a sin.

wrought miracles in the presence of Pharaoh. In reply to this I would remark, that there is nothing impossible in the supposition that God may *employ* Satan, or wicked men, as his instruments in performing miracles. It would be no certain evidence of the piety of a person that he was endowed with miraculous powers. He might have all faith, so that he could remove mountains, and yet, without charity, he would be nothing. Still, every real miracle, by whatever instrumentality produced, is the work of God, and is performed for some purpose worthy of God. Thus the miracle of the serpent's speaking—if miracle it was—was performed by God, not for the purpose of deceiving our first parents and drawing them into sin, but of *trying them*. They were on trial, and must be tried; and the speaking of the serpent constituted a necessary part of their probation.

It may well be doubted, however, whether this speaking of the serpent was a miracle, and whether a proper miracle was ever brought about through the instrumentality of Satan. Without doubt, Satan, and those under him, may, if permitted, do strange things,—things unaccountable to us; but unaccountable things are not all miracles. They do not necessarily involve a suspension or contravention of any of nature's laws.

And as to the alleged miracles of wicked men, it is likely that the most of them have been mere tricks, performed by some sleight of hand, for purposes of deception and of gain. Such, I have no doubt, were the pretended miracles of the magicians in Egypt. They did certain things *with their enchantments*, which is equivalent to saying that there was some deception in the case—that, in point of fact, they did not do them at all. And so of "the great signs and wonders" which our Saviour forewarned his disciples that the false Christs who should come after him would perform. We know what these "signs and wonders" were, for Josephus and others have informed us. They were the merest cheats and impositions, by which multitudes of the infatuated Jews were deluded to their destruction.

We come back, then, to the position first assumed,—that a clear and proper miracle is an event, not only out of the common course of nature, but contrary to it; transcending obviously the capacities of creatures, and implying in all cases a

direct intervention of Almighty power. A proper miracle always is, and may be known to be, a work of God.

Now, the Bible contains accounts of many such miracles,—miracles extending through a long succession of years, from the time of Moses to the end of the apostolic age. And these accounts are true, if the Bible is true. And the miracles performed were *real* miracles,—known to be such, both from their nature and their results. They were performed, not secretly, but openly; in the presence, not merely of partial friends, but of bitter enemies, who were constrained, much against their prejudices and their inclinations, to confess their reality. The results of them, too, were not momentary, but abiding. The plagues of Egypt continued until their reality was painfully and universally felt, and till Moses was entreated to pray for their removal. Those who were healed by our Saviour and his apostles continued healed; and those who were raised from the dead actually lived for a considerable time. These events, therefore, were not tricks, sleights of hand, impositions practised upon the eyes and ears of spectators, but sober *realities*,—acknowledged to be so at the time by both friends and foes. They were not merely strange and unaccountable things, above what we know of the powers of nature, but the most of them were palpably *contrary to nature*, involving a contravention or suspension of some one or more of nature's laws. Those who regard the Bible as true, must believe that these events actually took place as there described; and, if they took place, they certainly were *miracles*, and the hand of God was in them.

I know it has been said by Mr. Hume that the occurrence of a miracle cannot be established by any amount of testimony. His reasoning on the point is to this effect: "Since the ground of our reliance on testimony is experience and observation, and since we have more frequently found the testimony of others to be false than we have seen miracles performed; therefore, when the sacred writers speak of miracles, it is more likely that they tell falsehoods than that these occurrences actually took place." I have no occasion to go into a consideration of this oft-refuted objection here. It flatly contradicts, as it was designed to do, the truth of Scripture. It contradicts, also, the facts of nature;

for nature presents miracles a hundred-fold more numerous than those of the Bible. Geology tells us, not only of the commencement of organized existence on this earth, but of the successive destruction of old species of animals and vegetables, and the creation of new ones. But the commencement of every species is a miracle. Nature has a law according to which the different species, when once in existence, may perpetuate themselves, but no law according to which a new species may be commenced. The origin of every new species is, therefore, as I said, a miracle. And miracles of this nature have been vastly numerous. They have followed each other through countless ages, and in long succession. Their history is written, not on parchment, but in the deep recesses of the rocks, which are now beginning to be exhumed and investigated. What would Mr. Hume, if he were living, say of miracles such as these? Whatever may be thought of the testimony of apostles and evangelists, certainly the testimony of the rocks ought to be believed.

I might further add, in reply to Mr. Hume's objection, that the main premise on which it is based is without foundation.

The ground of our reliance on the testimony of others is not, as he alleges, experience and observation. This we know from undeniable facts. Men do not become credulous from experience, but rather incredulous. Our experience of the deceit and falsehood of the world leads us to doubt, more than to believe. Children, and those who have had but little experience, are in the habit of believing almost everything. Now, facts such as these, so common and obvious, go to assure us, as I said, that the ground of our reliance on testimony is not experience and observation. Of course, the grand assumption in Mr. Hume's argument is unfounded. The fact of miracles may be proved by testimony, just as well as any other fact; and where the testimony in support of them is conclusive (as it has been proved to be in the case before us), we are bound to believe that they actually took place.

But if the miracles of Scripture actually occurred, then *why* did they occur? What was the leading object or aim of them? They must have been performed by God for some great purpose; and it deeply concerns us to know what this purpose was.

The more *immediate* and *subordinate* ends to be answered by miracles may have been various. Not a few of them were performed out of compassion for the sick, the afflicted, the distressed. Others were inflicted in righteous judgment upon the wicked. Others still were intended for the trial of those more immediately concerned. They were resorted to as a means of forming and developing character. But all these were no more than subordinate purposes. They were not the grand leading object in view. This must have been something vastly higher, and of more general interest to the world.

The great end of miracles, obviously, was *to attest the divine mission of those who performed them*, and *the divine authority of the revelations which they were instructed to deliver*. In frequent instances this object is brought out prominently in the record; in others it evidently lies at the foundation, and constitutes the leading, prompting motive for the exertion of miraculous power. Thus when Moses went with a message from God to Pharaoh, he demanded (as it might have been presumed he would), "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." And now God proceeds, by a series of stupendous and crushing miracles, to show Pharaoh who he is, and to convince him that in the presence of the God of Israel he is himself but a worm. By these repeated miracles God attested the divine commission of Moses and Aaron, sanctioned their messages as coming from himself, and at length constrained the unwilling monarch to yield to the demands which at first he had so proudly resisted. So, when the murmuring Israelites in the desert called in question (as they often did) the divine commission of their appointed leaders, and the divine authority of their communications, miracles were almost instantly wrought to attest and sanction both. The dry rock is smitten, and water gushes forth. Aaron's rod flourisheth, while the others are dried up. The earth opens under the feet of the rebels, and they go down alive into the pit. In the days of Elijah, the people were halting between two opinions, not knowing whom to recognize as true prophets, or whether to worship God or Baal. And to satisfy them again, a notable miracle was wrought. Fire comes

down visibly from heaven, consumes the sacrifice and the wood, and licks up the very water in the surrounding trenches.

And, not to multiply instances from the Old Testament, our Saviour continually appealed to his miracles in proof of his Messiahship, and in attestation of the divine authority of his words. "The *works* which my Father hath given me to do, the same bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, *believe the works*, that ye may know that the Father is in me, and I in him."

The grand object of the apostles' miracles was precisely the same. "They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and *confirming the word with signs following*." When the apostleship of Paul was called in question, in vindication of it he appealed at once to his miracles. "Truly, the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, *in signs and wonders and mighty deeds*."

It may further satisfy us, as to the leading object of miracles, to take into consideration their frequent effect upon those that witnessed them. This was to compel an assent, and often an unwilling assent, to the divine mission and authority of those who performed them. Thus, the miracles of Moses convinced not only Pharaoh, but the magicians themselves. When they saw what was done, they were constrained to acknowledge, "This is the finger of God." The miracle of Elijah in raising the widow's son drew from her the following noble confession: "By this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth" (1 Kings xvii. 24). It was the miracles of Christ which convinced Nicodemus of his divine mission. "We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do the miracles that thou doest, except God be with him" (John iii. 2). So the miracle of Paul, in smiting Elymas, the sorcerer, with blindness, convinced all who saw it of the truth of his words. "And those who saw what was done believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord" (Acts xiii. 12).

In short, there can be no doubt as to the leading design and object of the miracles of the Bible. They were designed, as I

said, to attest the divine mission of the inspired teachers, and the divine authority of their communications; and thus to establish the faith, not only of those who heard them, but of all who should become acquainted with their words and works.

Such, then, was the declared design of the miracles of Scripture; and the only remaining question is, Were they sufficient for the object? In other words, Is the argument from miracles for the divine authority of Scripture conclusive?

It is certain that our Saviour often employed this argument, and urged it home upon the consciences of the Jews. Hence we cannot call in question the soundness of it without impeaching the character of Christ. But, not to insist upon this consideration, let us look into the argument itself. We have seen what proper miracles are, and that they are always the work of God. By whatever instrumentality they may be performed, they involve, of necessity, the direct intervention of Almighty power. But the Scriptures bring before us a long succession of miracles,—miracles in the strictest sense of the word,—every one of which was wrought by God, and with the intent to attest the divine authority of those revelations which he was making to the world. Is, then, the attestation of God to be relied on? Is his witness in this most important matter true? If so, the Scriptures are from him. They have all the authority which he can give them. They have the broad seal of Heaven stamped upon them, and are to be regarded and honored as veritable revelations of his truth and will.

I have dwelt the longer on this argument from miracles, because it is the one which infidels and skeptics have the most frequently and violently assailed; and because, when properly stated and vindicated (as it may be, and should be), it constitutes one of the main pillars on which the whole fabric of revelation rests.

The remaining arguments in proof of the divine authority of Scripture may be presented in fewer words.

3. The next I shall consider is that drawn from the *prophecies* of Scripture. To look into futurity and disclose distant future events, those depending, not on the ascertained laws and operations of nature, but upon seeming contingencies, or on the free

actions of men—this is the prerogative of God alone. No other being in the universe can do it. And so the case is represented in the Scriptures. "I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (Isa. xlvi. 9, 10). To "declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done;" in other words, to predict the distant and contingent future, is here represented as the prerogative of God alone. In another passage, God challenges the idols of the heathen to vindicate their claim to divinity by predicting future events. "Show us the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods;" implying that if they could show the things that were to be hereafter, their claim to divinity would be established (Isa. xli. 23). In the fifth chapter of the Apocalypse a vast map of the future is exhibited under the symbol of a sealed roll, or book; and "no creature in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." We are here taught the same lesson as before. To all created minds, the whole contingent future is a sealed book; and a sealed book it must remain, except so far as God is pleased to unseal and open it.

We conclude, therefore, that every proper prediction is a revelation from God. From the nature of the case it must be so. Creatures may presume, may conjecture, may make calculations; but God alone can with certainty predict. The calculations of creatures often disappoint them; but God's predictions never. These are sure to go into effect, and in the precise way and manner which he has indicated.

There is a passage in Deuteronomy (xiii. 1–3) which has been thought by some to contradict the statement that God alone can foretell future events. "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods and serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." The representation here is, as

some have thought, that the seducing prophet or dreamer may give a sign or a wonder that *shall come to pass;* or, in other words, that he may utter a *real prediction.* But is it certain that the representation implies as much as this? The greatest bungler at soothsaying may guess right in some instances. An adept in the business may do so frequently. But if he should guess right, and the thing which he predicted should come to pass, the Israelites were not to go after him, more especially if his object was to draw them into idolatry; but they were to regard the event as a necessary part of their trial, and adhere to the service of the Lord their God.

Or if we are to suppose the seducing prophet to utter a real prediction, the prediction must be regarded as having come, through him, from God, and designed, as before, for the trial of his people. In either case there is nothing in this scripture, or in any other, to contradict the supposition that *every real prediction is a revelation from God.*

The only question, then, is, Does the Bible contain real predictions? And what fair-minded reader of the Bible can entertain a doubt on this subject? Here is a continued series of predictions, reaching from Genesis to the Revelation, many of which have been most remarkably fulfilled,—so remarkably, in some instances, as to constrain the unbeliever, in opposition to all historical evidence, to affirm that the alleged prediction must have been written subsequent to the events foretold; that it is, in fact, history, and not prophecy. Witness the predictions of Isaiah as to the capture of Babylon, and the return of the Jews; and Daniel's vision of the four beasts; and our Saviour's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem; and the declarations of all the prophets as to the present scattered and separate state of the Jewish people. But if the Bible contains real predictions, then certainly it contains revelations from God, and is of divine authority.

4. Another argument to the same point may be drawn from the early and rapid *propagation* of Christianity. When we consider the obstacles which, in primitive times, opposed the progress of the gospel, the feebleness of the means employed to promote it, and the nature of its doctrines and requisitions as

being opposed to the natural feelings and characters of men, there is no way to account for its wide and rapid diffusion but by regarding it as of divine origin and authority. False religions have sometimes spread rapidly, either because of their adaptation to the corrupt propensities and habits of men, or because they were propagated with the sword. But neither of these causes wrought anything in favor of the spread of the gospel. Their influence was all the other way. The sword, instead of being wielded for its support, was used with terrible effect for its overthrow. The powers of earth and hell were enlisted against it. And yet this hated and persecuted religion prevailed, in face of all opposition, till, in less than four hundred years, it became the religion of the vast Roman Empire, and virtually of the civilized world. I repeat, there is no way possible in which, under the circumstances, to account for the early and rapid diffusion of the gospel, but by supposing it to have come from God.

If we look now into the *gospel itself*, we shall find additional proof of its divine origin. This is evident—

5. From the nature and excellency of its *doctrines*. From the very *nature* of many of the facts and truths of the Bible, it is certain that no being but God could have revealed them. What other being could have instructed us respecting the creation of the world; the introduction of sin; the mysterious mode of the divine existence; the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit; the peculiar work of each of these personages in our redemption; the resurrection of the body; the general judgment; and the retributions of eternity? A book instructing us on these and similar topics, and *telling the truth*, must necessarily be from God. And in regard to most of the *doctrines* of the gospel, when we consider their elevated and elevating character,—their reasonableness, their purity, their moral excellence, their immeasurable superiority to all the works of mere philosophers; and consider, too, that their human authors were unlettered men; poor, despised Jews and Israelites,—we are constrained to admit that these doctrines must have had something more than a mere human origin. They must have come from God.

6. The divine authority of the Bible may be argued from the purity and elevation of its *moral code*. In this respect it disdains all comparison with the most celebrated ethical works of antiquity. It is as much above them as the heavens are higher than the earth. But how came the illiterate authors of the Bible by this elevated and perfect system of morality, unless they were supernaturally taught of God?

This argument may be presented in another form. The Scriptures claim to be a revelation from God. If they are not such, they are a gross imposition. But who imposed them? Who were the authors of the cheat? Not *good* men, certainly; for good men would do no such thing. Not *bad* men, certainly; for bad men would never have given us such a book as this. The purity and elevation of its moral code and character utterly forbid the supposition.

7. The *fulness* of Scripture is an evidence of its divine origin. Human compositions, after several perusals, usually become uninteresting and insipid. We grasp the author's meaning, we possess ourselves of his ideas, and the work becomes stale. But not so the Bible. The more frequently and closely this is studied, the more interesting it becomes. Something new and excellent is discovered at every sitting. At the close of a long life, the most diligent students of the Bible have often said that they seemed to have but just entered on a boundless field. Like the widow's barrel and cruse, this holy book is never exhausted, though continually supplying materials for spiritual nourishment and growth. Few of the human race are so weak as not to be capable of understanding much of the Bible; none are so great and learned as to compass and comprehend it all.

8. In nothing is the Bible more remarkable, and more clearly of divine origin, then in *its exact adaptation to human wants*. It is in this respect, emphatically, *the one thing needful*. Situated as men are in the present world, they stand in need of many things. They need light and instruction; need motives and encouragements; need a Saviour and a Sanctifier; need spiritual protection and support. They need to be enlightened in regard to the unseen and endless future;—to know what they are, and what they must be; what God has done for them,

and what they must do for themselves, in order that they may be happy forever. Now, without going into any discussion, it may be affirmed, in the general, that, in respect to all these most important particulars, the Bible is just what we need. It shows itself to have come from a Being who knows our wants, and has most wisely adapted his revelations to meet them.

9. Another argument for the divine origin and authority of Scripture grows out of the *harmony* of its several parts among themselves, and with the teachings of nature. Between the two Testaments, and the different parts of each of them, there is a remarkable and perfect agreement. The design, the end, the doctrines, the duties, the hopes encouraged and the motives urged, are throughout the same, and are consistent one with another. This fact is the more remarkable, since the doctrines and precepts of the Bible are usually delivered in detached sentences and unconnected propositions, rather than in regular discourses; and since the writers lived in ages and countries far distant from each other, and could not possibly have concerted the coincidences which appear in their books. One part of the harmony of Scripture consists in the agreement between symbol and substance, type and antitype,—an agreement involving the nature of a prediction, and which could have been effected by no being but God.

Other religions, which prevailed extensively in ancient times, and prevail now, present many things contradictory to the *teachings of nature;* at which science and reason and the moral sense revolt. But not so the Bible. This is a republication of the religion of nature,—with many and glorious additions, but with no contradictions. Both are manifestly from the same great Author.

10. There is something in the peculiar *manner* of the sacred writers which indicates an accompanying divine assistance and wisdom. I refer now to the ease and readiness with which they throw out their ideas and announce their decisions on the most mysterious and incomprehensible subjects,—those farthest removed from the ordinary processes of human thought. We find no misgiving, no hesitancy, no apparent labor of the understanding here, such as we might expect to find had the writers

been left to their own unaided powers; but, on the contrary, all is easy and positive and certain. They speak "as those having authority, and not as the scribes." The explanation is, *they had authority*. They had a commission and a revelation from the Holy One.

11. The divine authority of the Scriptures may be inferred from the *power* which has attended them, and from the great and *good effects* which they have produced in the world. This power and these effects may be regarded in a twofold light: either as bearing on the individual, or on society in general. In reference to the individual, the Scriptures alone—of all the systems of philosophy or religion that have ever been proclaimed—possess the power of subduing the heart, and radically reforming the character and life. The Scriptures alone have proved themselves to be "quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword;" "mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds;" and "able to make men wise unto salvation." Unless these Scriptures are from God, and are accompanied to the soul by an energy from heaven, how is it possible to account for these saving results upon the minds and hearts of the children of men?

As to the good effects of Christianity upon society in general, it would be easy to write volumes; but I can say only a few words. Let any person compare the state of the Christian world—the spirit of its laws, the tone of public sentiment and morals, its progress in learning and civilization, its humane and charitable institutions—with the state of the heathen in ancient or in modern times, and he will see what are the tendency and effects of Christianity. Or let any one compare the characters of true Christians—their holy, exemplary lives and happy deaths—with the lives and deaths of modern infidels, and he will see the same. And the only reason why this argument is not more convincing is, that the true spirit of Christianity is so poorly developed. If the gospel were universally received and obeyed, wars and fightings would cease; superstition, oppression, and every form of wickedness would come to an end; and virtue and happiness would reign throughout the world. All men would then see and acknowledge that a religion which bore

such fruit, which produced such great and good results, must have originated in heaven.

12. I have but another argument to urge in favor of the divine authority of the Bible,—the same which was urged in support of its truth: it is that which the Christian finds in his own soul. "If any man," saith Christ, "will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine *whether it be of God.*" True Christians have fulfilled the condition here proposed, and they realize the truth of the promise. They do know of the doctrine that *it is of God.* They find such a blessed agreement between the representations of Scripture and the feelings of their own hearts, that they cannot doubt as to the divine origin of the Bible. It must have proceeded from the same Being who knows the hearts of his children perfectly, and has so accurately set them forth in the pages of his Word. This argument has more weight, probably, than every other, with Christians in common life, to remove their doubts, and give them a settled, unwavering faith in the truth and divine authority of the Sacred Word.

If the Bible is God's book, coming to us in his name and by his authority, then it deserves a *most serious and reverent attention.* Who would not listen, were God to speak to him in an audible voice from the heavens? Yet God is as really speaking to us in his Word, as though he addressed us in a voice of thunder from the skies. The Apostle Peter, on the mount of transfiguration, actually heard the Holy One speaking to him from the clouds. Referring to this event near the close of life, the apostle says: "We have a *more sure word of prophecy*, unto which ye do well to take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place" (2 Pet. i. 19). Yes, a *more sure word of prophecy;* more to be regarded, more to be depended on, than a voice of thunder from the skies. The latter might deceive us; the former never will. We might stand in doubt as to the cause of the latter; but respecting the author of the former, we cannot, with any reason, stand in doubt. Let us, then, listen to the exhortation of the holy apostle. Let us give diligent heed to this more sure word of prophecy, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts.

LECTURE X.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

In my last Lecture I endeavored to show that the Scriptures are of divine authority; in other words, that God has made supernatural revelations of his truth and will to mankind, and that these revelations are in the Bible. The Bible is a record of them. The question now arises: Is this a *merely human record*, in the main faithful, but, like everything else human, fallible and imperfect? Or is it a *divinely inspired and infallible record?* Were the sacred writers left to their own unaided wisdom in accomplishing their work; or were they so inspired and assisted as to be secured from all mistakes and errors, being led to write just what the Divine Spirit would have them write, and in just the manner in which he would have them write it? These last questions we answer in the affirmative; and this is what we mean by *the inspiration of the Scriptures.*

It will be seen that the inspiration of Scripture, thus defined, is a subject by itself. Other subjects are intimately connected with it, but yet are distinct from it, and should be kept distinct. They cannot be confounded with it without embarrassing the question. We may settle the canon of Scripture ever so satisfactorily; we may settle the authenticity and integrity of our sacred books; we may satisfy ourselves that they are true, and contain revelations from God: but the question still remains, What kind of *record* have we of those revelations? This record was made by men, and is in the style and the language of men; but is it *merely* human? Or were its original writers so guided, guarded, superintended, assisted, that—without any restraint upon the natural exercise of their own powers—they were enabled to give us an unerring standard of duty and of truth?

Theologians have spoken of several kinds of inspiration; as that of *elevation*, of *superintendence*, and of *suggestion*. The inspiration of elevation is a mere exciting, quickening, and elevating of the human faculties,—filling the soul with great thoughts and strong emotions, and thus enabling it to give utterance to just and noble sentiments. Such was the inspiration of some of the ancient poets and philosophers. Such was the inspiration of David and Daniel, of John and Paul. Such is the inspiration of many in modern times. And there are not a few who claim that this is the *only* inspiration; that it is, or ought to be, a common gift; that all should expect it, and be aspiring after it. But, so far as this being the only inspiration, it is not properly inspiration at all. Certainly, it is not inspiration in the sense in which we propose to consider the subject. A great many causes may tend to excite and elevate the minds of men—exciting circumstances, nervous diseases, narcotic stimulants, etc.; but shall we deem all such persons inspired? Besides, a large part of the Bible seems not to have been written under the influence of any unnatural excitement or elevation. It is simple narrative. It is plain, sober, didactic prose. Are we, then, to regard such portions of Scripture as destitute of inspiration? This theory of inspiration is a virtual denial of it, in any proper sense of the term. It is putting the Bible on a level with the writings of other ancient sages and poets, which is to take away utterly its divine character, and make it no longer of binding authority.

The distinction between the inspiration of *suggestion* and that of *superintendence*, I regard as one of degree, and of no great practical importance. The first supposes the Spirit to have suggested, throughout, the very words of Scripture. The latter supposes him to have so superintended the minds and hands and pens of the sacred writers, that they were effectually guarded against all error, and were led to write just that which God, on the whole, preferred. The probability is that both these kinds of inspiration were enjoyed at times; or that the Spirit was imparted to the sacred writers in different degrees, as occasion required. When recording direct revelations from God,—things about which they had no other means of knowledge; or when

recording, as they often did, the very words of the Lord, uttered by him in his own person,—they must have had what has been called the inspiration of suggestion. The very words to be recorded were suggested to their minds. So when recording things which they had once known, but had forgotten, they needed (what the Saviour expressly promised them) the aid of the Spirit, to "bring all things to their remembrance." But when recording events of which they were fully informed, either from personal observation or the information of others, they needed only such a supervision as should prevent all mistake, and lead them to write, and in the right manner, what was in accordance with the divine will. In every case they had such assistance as they needed, in order to give to the world a divinely accredited record of the Sacred Word,—an infallible standard of duty and of truth.

The subject before us has been embarrassed, at times, by not marking the distinction between *inspiration* and *revelation*. Revelation is the direct impartation of God's truth to the mind of the prophet,—truth of which he could in no other way obtain a knowledge. Inspiration denotes the assistance afforded in the utterance of God's truth, or in recording what God was pleased to have written in his Word. All scripture is not divine revelation; but all scripture is written under a *divine inspiration*, and consequently is an infallible record of what God would have recorded for our "instruction in righteousness." There are passages in the Bible which are not true in any sense, and of course are not a revelation of God's truth. Such were the speech of the serpent to our first mother; and the message of Rabshakeh to the Jews in the days of Hezekiah; and the spiteful letter of Sanballat to Nehemiah; and the plea of Tertullus against Paul; and the false reasonings and reproaches of Job's three friends. Yet all these, and the like scriptures, may have been written under a divine inspiration. We have a true and inspired account of things said and done, however false they may be in themselves.

It follows, from the statements which have been made, that the Scriptures are the work both of men and of God; of men in the regular exercise of their own faculties, each expressing his

thoughts in his own natural way; while each is so supervised, assisted, directed by the Divine Spirit as to record infallibly God's truth and will. It has been doubted by some whether such a union of the divine agency and the human, in the work of inspiration, was possible. But we have proof of its possibility, and also of its credibility, in that it conforms so exactly to God's usual method of operating in other things. It is in God that "we live and move and have our being;" yet, in giving us life, and breath, and being, God interrupts not the regular exercise of our own natural powers, but rather sustains them. The conversion and sanctification of the soul, too, is the work of God; yet in this work there is no interference with the normal activities of him who is the subject of it. "God worketh in us to will and to do, of his own good pleasure," while we "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." And just so in the matter of inspiration. God supervises, assists, restrains, suggests, and does all that is necessary, that the utterance or the record may be in accordance with his will; and yet the subject of it thinks his own thoughts, exercises his own faculties, and speaks or writes much after his own natural method.

But, without further explanation, we come now to the question of proof. What evidence have we that the holy Scriptures are, in the sense explained, inspired? And I remark—

1. This is, *à priori*, a *reasonable supposition*. If God were to be at the expense of making a revelation, he would not be likely to leave it to human imperfection and weakness, infirmity and error, to make a record of it. We might reasonably anticipate that he would so inspire and assist his servants, that they should utter and record his word in the manner most agreeable to his will. This certainly is a reasonable supposition; and it should prepare us to look with favor on such evidence as may be presented to show that the supposition is true.

2. In my last Lecture I spoke of a peculiarity of *manner* in the sacred writers as furnishing proof of their divine authority. The same consideration may be urged in support of their inspiration. The style of our sacred books is indeed human, as I have said. It shows itself to be the style of *men*,—of men, too, in the exercise of their own faculties, each evincing his pecu-

liarities of education and thought. And yet there is often a something, almost indescribable, in the style and manner of the sacred writers, which shows that it is not altogether of men; that it carries with it the wisdom and the power of God. Witness the ease and the certainty with which these writers announce their decisions on the deepest and most difficult subjects,—those farthest removed from the ordinary course of investigation and thought. Witness, also, the inexhaustible fulness, the unfailing suggestiveness, of the Sacred Writings. When read for the thousandth time, there is no palling upon the sense, or wearing out; but always a welling up of something new, showing a depth of meaning, like the Author, unsearchable.

There is a peculiarity of manner in the sacred writers, when speaking of the faults of one another, or when describing the wicked actions of men. In either case there is no exaggeration or concealment, but a simple, unimpassioned annunciation of the truth. Thus, in recording Peter's denial of his Master, "we find no stern denunciation of the act, and no indignant allusion to its cowardice or ingratitude; but lightly, as the glance of his Master's eye fell upon the smitten countenance of the wayward apostle, so the pen of the sacred writer just describes the occurrence, and passes on." So also in recording the sufferings and death of Christ. "There is no strong expression of human sympathy accompanying the story of the agony in the garden, the awful scene before Pilate, or the horrors of the cross. No burst of emotion attends their Master's body to the tomb, or welcomes his resurrection; and yet who has not felt that this treatment of their theme but adds to its pathos and its grandeur?"

The divinity of the style and manner of the sacred writers can be best appreciated, perhaps, by comparison. Let the intelligent and candid reader but step off from the sacred page of either Testament, and begin to traverse other writings of nearly the same period,—for instance, the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, or the works of Philo, Josephus, or the Christian Fathers,—and he will know what we mean when we speak of an indescribable something in the style and manner of the sacred penmen which indicates a wisdom that is from above.

3. From the very nature of the case, a considerable portion of the Bible *must be inspired;* else it is palpable imposture. In no small part of the Old Testament we have God himself speaking in the first person. We have what purports to be his own words. And, if the Bible is true, they *are* his own words; and the sacred writers must have been *verbally inspired* in recording them. So in the Gospels, we have, through whole chapters, what purports to be the very words of Christ. Now, the writers of the Gospels may have been perfectly honest, but their memories were treacherous; and how could they be sure, after the lapse of years, that they were giving the real words of Christ, unless they were guided and assisted from above? Hence the value of that promise which was given to the disciples: "The Comforter, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and *bring all things to your remembrance*, whatsoever I have spoken unto you" (John xiv. 26).

There are still other portions of the Bible which, if they are true, must be inspired. I refer to those parts in which the writer records transactions which took place long ages before he was born. For example: How did Moses know what God said to Adam and Cain and Noah and Abraham, and the other patriarchs, and what these men said in reply, unless he were under a divine inspiration? He might have received some general account of things by tradition; but he does not profess to record doubtful traditions, but the very words which were spoken one way and the other. Yet, in order to this, he must have had a plenary, verbal inspiration.

4. The sacred writers were *commissioned of God* to give utterance to his truth, and they had a *promise*, expressed or implied, of all needed assistance in their work. This was true of Moses. "Now therefore *go*, and *I will be with thy mouth*, and *I will teach thee what thou shalt say*" (Ex. iv. 12). Here we have both the commission and the promise,—an express promise of plenary inspiration. The same also was true of the other prophets. They were all sent—commissioned of God, and had a promise, expressed or implied, that he would be with them. "Thou, therefore," says God to Jeremiah, "gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee. Be

not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for *I am with thee*, saith the Lord" (Jer. i. 17, 19). In similar language God commissioned Ezekiel, and sent him forth. "Son of man, I send thee to a rebellious nation, that hath rebelled against me. I do send thee unto them, and thou shalt say unto them, *Thus saith the Lord God.* Be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions. Thou shalt speak *my words* unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear" (Ez. ii. 3–7).

Jeremiah had an express commission from God, twice repeated, not only to speak his words of warning and rebuke, but *to write them in a book.* "Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day that I spoke unto thee, even unto this day." Jeremiah did as he was commanded; and when the infatuated king of Judah had destroyed the record, the prophet was commissioned to write again. "Take thee another roll, and write in it all the words that were in the first roll, which the king of Judah hath burnt" (Jer. xxxvi. 2, 28).

The Apostle John was commissioned to write the book of Revelation; and his commission was repeated, in respect to different parts of it, no less than twelve times. The last two instances in which the commissions are repeated are particularly instructive in regard to the point before us. "*Write*, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, *These are the true sayings of God.*" "And he that sat upon the throne said, *Write; for these words are true and faithful.*" Who shall doubt, after declarations such as these, that John wrote the Revelation at the command and under the inspiration of God? (Rev. xix. 9; xxi. 5.)

That the apostles acted under a commission from Christ, in going forth to publish his truth, no one can entertain a doubt. As much as this is implied in the very name that was given to them,—*apostles*, *missionaries*, men *sent forth* to a specific work. And that they had assurances of all needed support and assist-

ance, amounting to a plenary inspiration, is certain. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "*I will give you a mouth and wisdom*, which no adversary can gainsay or resist." "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *he shall teach you all things*, and *bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*." "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he shall guide you into all truth*. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." "When they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for *it shall be given you, in that same hour, what ye shall speak;* for it is not ye that speak, but *the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you*." There is no mistaking the import of language such as this. We have here promise upon promise that the servants of Christ, in giving utterance to his truth, should be directed by an influence from on high. They should have the Spirit to guide them into all truth, and bring all things accurately to their remembrance.

And now, if it be said that the promises here quoted refer rather to the work of teaching than writing, I answer, first, that this is not true of them all. In some instances inspired men were commissioned specifically to write. But where the promise does refer more directly to the work of teaching, we are not to regard it as confined to this. We may conclude, *à fortiori*, that it was intended to reach farther. For if inspired men stood in need of divine assistance in *speaking* the word to those immediately around them, much more did they need it in committing this living word to *writing*, for the benefit of the church in all coming time. And that same good Being, who was so careful to meet their necessities in the former case, assuredly would not fail them in the latter.

5. The writers of both Testaments virtually *claimed* inspiration. This did Moses and the prophets continually. They came to the people with a "*Thus saith the Lord;*" and in many instances, through whole chapters, they profess to give the very words of the Most High; a thing which they could never do unless these words were suggested to them at the time.

David says of himself: "*The Spirit of the Lord spake by*

me, and *his word was in my tongue*" (2 Sam. xxiii. 2). "*The Spirit entered into me*," says Ezekiel, "when he spake to me, and set me upon my feet, and I heard him that spake unto me" (Ez. ii. 2).

The writers of the New Testament generally speak of their communications as *the word of God*, and thus virtually claim for themselves a divine inspiration. "It was necessary that *the word of God* should first have been spoken unto you." "They spake *the word of God* with boldness." "I certify you," says Paul, "that the gospel which was preached of me was not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but *by the revelation of Jesus Christ*." "Which things we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but *which the Holy Ghost teacheth*." "The things which I write unto you *are the commandments of the Lord*." The only question in regard to such passages is, Do the writers speak the truth? If they do, there can be no doubt as to the fact of their inspiration.

6. The sacred writers not only claimed inspiration for themselves, but they *assert it* one of another, and of the Scriptures generally. The titles which they give to the Sacred Writings are enough of themselves to prove their inspiration. They are not only *the* Scriptures, *the* writings,—which is itself a most significant title,—but they are "*the holy Scriptures*," "*the Scriptures of truth*," "*the oracles of God*," etc. This last is a peculiarly expressive title,—*the oracles of God*. No one can doubt as to the design and use of the ancient oracles. Among the heathen they were the place where the voice of the god was heard—where his responses were sounded forth. Yet this most significant title is given by Paul to the entire canon of the Old Testament Scriptures. They are "the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 2).

Most of the Jewish prophets lived and wrote either during the captivity or before it. Let us now consult those of them who wrote after the captivity, and see how unequivocally they ascribe inspiration to the prophets who preceded them. "We have forsaken," says Ezra, "thy commandments, which *thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets*" (Ez. ix. 10). "Yet many years," says Nehemiah, "didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them *by thy Spirit in thy prophets*" (Neh.

ix. 30). "They made their hearts," says Zechariah, "like an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which *the Lord of hosts* hath *sent in his Spirit by the former prophets*" (Zech. vii. 12). In passages such as these, to which many of like import might be added, the inspiration of the earlier prophets is most expressly asserted.

Our Saviour uniformly speaks of the Scriptures—meaning, of course, the Old Testament Scriptures—as *the Word of God*, and *inspired*. Addressing the Sadducees, he says: "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you *by God*, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" "The *Holy Ghost spake* by the mouth of David," etc. "Well *spake the Holy Ghost* by Esaias the prophet," etc. "*The word of God* cannot be broken" (John x. 35). "Making *the word of God* of none effect by your traditions" (Mark vii. 12).

Paul thus testifies on the point before us: "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God.*" "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, *spake in time past by the prophets*, hath in these latter days *spoken unto us by his Son.*" Nothing can be more decisive than this testimony. If language such as this does not prove the inspiration of the Bible, no language can. I only add—

7. The full inspiration of the Scriptures has been the doctrine of the church in all periods of its history. Nothing further need be said to show that the *sacred writers*, both before and after Christ, held this doctrine. We have seen that they had the *promise* of inspiration; that they *claimed* it; and that they assert it of the Scriptures in general, and of one another. But how was the doctrine held by learned Jews, between the closing of the canon of the Old Testament and the opening of the New? And how by the early Christian Fathers? Looking into the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, we find the following prayer in Baruch: "O Lord our God, . . . as thou speakedst to thy servant Moses in the day that *thou didst command him to write thy law.*" In Ecclesiasticus, the law of Moses is spoken

of as "*the covenant of the Most High*," which "covenant is everlasting," its "light uncorrupt," and its "decrees eternal."

Philo entertained the most extravagant ideas of inspiration, representing the subject of it as unconscious, his spirit being controlled by the indwelling Spirit of God. The prophet, for the time, is like "an instrument moved invisibly by God's power." All his utterances proceed from the suggestions of another. The prophetic rapture having overcome his faculties, the Divine Spirit takes full possession of him, dwells in him, and moves the entire organism of speech, prompting to the announcement of all that he foretells.

Such were the views of Philo as to the inspiration of the prophets. Those of Josephus were much the same. He speaks of the books of Scripture as "*divine*." "It is implanted in every Jew, from the hour of his birth, to esteem these books as *the ordinances of God;* to stand fast by them; and in defence of them, if need be, to die."

With regard to the faith of the early Christians on this subject, we can have no better evidence than their creeds. The creed of Irenæus commences thus: "The church, though it be dispersed over all the earth, has received from the apostles the belief in one God, the Father; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God; and in the Holy Ghost, *who spake by the prophets*." In the Nicene Creed, as completed by the Council of Constantinople, we have the following: "We believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and Son is worshipped and glorified, and who *spake by the prophets*."

Clement of Rome, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (chap. 45), says: "Give diligent heed to the Scriptures, *the true sayings of the Holy Ghost*."

Justin Martyr says: "Think not that the words which you hear the prophet speaking in his own person are uttered by himself. Being filled by the Spirit, *they are from the Divine Logos which moves him*" (Apol. i. 336).

"The Sacred Books," says Origen, "breathe *the fulness of the Spirit*. There is nothing, either in the law, in the gospels, or

in the apostles, which did not descend *from the fulness of the Divine Majesty*" (Works, Vol. iii. p. 282).

"It is needless to inquire," says Gregory the Great, "who wrote the book of Job; since we may surely believe that *the Holy Ghost was its author*" (Works, Vol. i. p. 7).

"What avails it," says Theodoret, "to know whether all the Psalms were written by David? it being plain that *all were composed under the influence of the Holy Spirit*" (Works, Vol. i. p. 395).

It is needless to quote further from the early Christian Fathers. They were unanimous on the subject of inspiration, and took high ground in regard to it. They commonly spoke of the Scriptures as "the law of God," "the word of God," "the voice of God," "the oracles of Heaven," "the oracles of the Holy Ghost;" as "dictated by the Spirit of God;" as "the doctrine of the Holy Ghost." Borrowing the figure from Philo, they not unfrequently compare the soul of the prophet, when under the divine influence, to an instrument of music, into which the Holy Spirit breathes, and on the strings of which he strikes. They even represent those as infidels "who do not believe that the Holy Ghost uttered the divine Scriptures" (Euseb., Book V. Chap. 28).

But this blessed doctrine of inspiration, so dear to the church in its earliest and purest times, is doubted of by many at the present day. A variety of objections have been urged against it, which, before we close, it will be necessary briefly to examine.

1. It has been objected to the inspiration of the apostles, that they were imperfect men, — ignorant, envious, prejudiced, and sometimes at variance among themselves. It is true that the apostles, more especially in the early part of their ministry, were not what they should be. They were imperfect men; and so were all the sacred writers. But this does not militate against the fact of their inspiration. No one supposes them to have been inspired at all times, in their daily intercourse with each other, and with their fellow-men. It was only while employed in giving utterance to the truth of God, either in teaching or

writing, that they needed inspiration, or enjoyed the gift. And thus far they might be inspired, notwithstanding any remaining defects of character.

2. It has been objected to the idea of a plenary inspiration, that there are great differences of style in different parts of the Bible,—each individual seeming to write and speak in his own peculiar, natural way. And so, on the theory of inspiration which we adopt, we might suppose it would be. If, as some have believed, the sacred writers, while under the influence of the Spirit, had been deprived of the regular exercise of their own powers, so as to be mere passive instruments in the hands of God, there would be some reason for connecting the idea of inspiration with great uniformity in point of style. But if, as we hold, they were left to the natural exercise of their own powers, while they were instructed, guided, superintended by the Spirit, and led by him to write that, and only that, which was agreeable to his will, then the differences of style which appear in their writings are no objection to the idea of their inspiration. They are just what might reasonably be expected.

That these differences of style are consistent with even a verbal inspiration, is evident from the Scriptures themselves. In many parts of Scripture, as before remarked, we find God speaking in his own person. Whole chapters of this nature occur not unfrequently in the prophets. Now, in such chapters there must have been a verbal inspiration. The very words must have been suggested to the minds of the writers. And yet we find the same differences of style here as in the other parts of the Sacred Writings. God, speaking in his own person by the mouth of Hosea or Amos, adopts the style of these men; but when speaking by the mouth of Isaiah or Joel, he adopts the higher and more poetical diction of these prophets.

3. The proof of inspiration, we have seen, rests mainly on the *testimony* of the sacred writers. Now, it has been objected that these writers, when under the influence of the Spirit, may not have been *conscious* of his presence with them, and consequently were not prepared to give a valid testimony in the case. But it is evident from the Scriptures that the sacred writers *did know* when they were under the inspiration of the Spirit. They were

not in the Spirit at all times; and when the inspiration was upon them, and God was speaking by them, they must have known it. Did not Moses know when God met him, and gave him his messages to Pharaoh? Did he not know, when he was writing out the law, that he was writing God's words, and not his own? And when it is said so many times over by the prophets, "The word of the Lord came unto me," did they not know whereof they affirmed?

Of the particular state of the prophets' minds, while under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, we can have no accurate conception, having had no experience or knowledge of the same. Perhaps they were not all affected in the same way. But that there was a peculiarity about their state, of which they were fully conscious, and which enabled them to give a decided and valid testimony, there can be no doubt. "I am full of power," says the prophet Micah, "by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and unto Israel his sin" (Mich. iii. 8). Jeremiah resolved, on one occasion, that he would not again make mention of the Lord, or speak any more in his name. "But his word," says he, "was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones. I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." On another occasion Jeremiah says, "I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will pour it out upon the children, and upon the assembly of young men" (Jer. vi. 11; xx. 9). Ezekiel also says, "The Spirit lifted me up, and took me away; and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me" (Ez. iii. 14). We see, in these scriptures, how little reason there is to call in question the testimony of the sacred writers, on the ground that they did not know when they were inspired, or whether they were inspired or not.

4. It has been thought by some that this whole question of inspiration amounts to but little, since we have naught in our hands at present but transcripts and translations, the original copies, which alone were inspired, having long been lost. But we do think it of great importance to have had an *inspired and infallible original*. From such an original all the existing copies

and versions came; and though we have not the autographs with which to compare them, still, we can compare them one with another; we can judge of differences where they exist; we can judge wherein they differ, if at all, from the original copies; and can thus approximate, at least, to the true standard. The original copies of the ancient classics have all passed away; yet we like to know that there *were* such copies, and by careful revision, comparison, and criticism, we can measurably restore them.

A copy of the Scriptures, or a version, is a proper subject of criticism. We may properly inquire, not whether the original writers made mistakes, but whether mistakes have not occurred since; whether the copy or the version conforms to the original. Thus far may human criticism lawfully go in this direction, but no farther. If it may transcend this limit; if it may go to the original itself, or to what is decided, on sufficient grounds, to have been the original, to pass upon mistakes and errors there,—then we have no standard left. The criticism of copies and versions has come to be a science of well-defined principles, which has been rewarded with most important results. "But," as one has well said, "the criticism of prophets and apostles, the sitting in judgment upon those who preached and wrote by inspiration, and to whom the Spirit of God brought all things to remembrance—this is a new science, one upon which we do not care to venture, and the results of which we should distrust and dread."

5. It is objected to the idea that "*all* scripture is given by inspiration of God," that there are things of small importance in the Bible,—things not worthy to be inspired. But we are not suitable judges, always, as to the comparative greatness or smallness of events. Things may seem small to us which, in their connections, are of vast importance. Great effects flow often from little causes. A spark of fire is a very little thing, but it may result in an explosion or a conflagration. "The cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books; but especially the parchments." No one can tell, at this day, of how great importance it may

have been to Paul, a close prisoner at Rome, to get his cloak, his books, and his parchments.

But, granting that there are small things in the Bible, do we not find the same in nature? Yet who would conclude, from the existence of insects and animalcules, that God was not the author of nature? The resemblance, in this respect, between the Bible and nature, rather indicates that both may have proceeded from the same hand.

6. It is said that there are indelicate expressions, *vulgarities* in the Bible, which forbid the idea that it should all have been inspired. But are we fully competent to judge in regard to this matter? Shall we set ourselves up as the standard of delicacy for all ages and people? In regard to this matter, like most others, the notions of people vary in different places and at different times. What would be sufficiently delicate to an Oriental now, and would have been so regarded by our own fathers and mothers two hundred years ago, may strike us differently. Besides, words and phrases often become indelicate as they become common; and there is a necessity for changing them for those which are less common. But here is a book, of which the words and phrases, as they stand in the original, must never be changed. They must remain the same in all periods of time. This, doubtless, is a principal reason why some few of the words of Scripture, to a modern ear, may seem indelicate.

7. It is further objected that there is *false philosophy* in the Bible. It speaks of the sun's rising and setting and standing still. It represents the firmament as a shining canopy over our heads, and the opaque moon as one of the lights of heaven. To this it is enough to reply, that the Bible was not designed to teach us philosophy. It is not a book of natural science. In describing natural, visible objects, the writers were directed, and for the best reasons, to speak *phenomenally;* to use the current phraseology of the times; to write according to invariable appearances, without any philosophical theory whatever. And we should as soon think of charging a writer with falsehood now, who should speak of the sun's rising and setting, and of

the moon as one of the lights of heaven, as to prefer the like charge against Moses, and insist that he could not have been inspired because such a phraseology occurs in his writings.

8. It is still further objected that there are *contradictions* in the Bible. That there are a few seeming inconsistencies,—passages which, with our means of knowledge, we may not be able fully to harmonize—need not be denied. But that there were any real contradictions in the original Scriptures, as they came from God, is what no believer in divine inspiration can admit, and no denier of it can prove. We speak advisedly on this subject, having had occasion, within the last few months, to examine most, if not all, the cases which have been alleged.[1] Some are the result, obviously, of mistake in transcribing, translating, or interpreting; while others arise from our ignorance of attendant circumstances, and might at once be harmonized if these were fully known. With regard to alleged contradictions in the Bible, most heartily do we acquiesce in the following declaration of Justin, in his dialogue with Trypho: "I dare not either imagine or assert that the Scriptures contradict each other; but were any passage adduced which had the appearance of being opposed to another, being altogether persuaded that no such opposition really exists, I will rather confess that I do not myself understand what is said" (chap. lxv. p. 162).

9. It has been objected to the inspiration of the New Testament, that its writers sometimes make quotations from the Old Testament incorrectly, and apply them improperly. They do not always quote with strict verbal accuracy, nor do they pretend to; but we see not how this can be urged against either their inspiration or their truth. How often do we thus quote from the Scriptures, and from other books, without any impeachment of veracity!

Nor do the writers of the New Testament always *apply* the language quoted from the Old according to its original and literal acceptation. In some few instances they *adopt* this language as a phraseology familiar to them, in which to express and enforce their thoughts; just as the classical scholar some-

[1] See Christian Review for July, 1858, pp. 390–415.

times incorporates a passage from his favorite author, without stopping to inquire whether his application of it is precisely according to the original intent. It is to his purpose, he adopts it, and passes on. To the apostles and evangelists, the Old Testament was almost their only classic. Its language was dear and familiar to them. They were literally men of one book. And from this loved book they, in some few instances, take a passage or a clause, because it is apposite and illustrative, without pretending to apply it just as it was applied by the original writer. Now, we see nothing in this which is at all inconsistent with their good character, or their inspiration. It is to be understood, of course, that the language thus quoted becomes, by its adoption, the language of inspiration, and carries with it a divine authority.

10. The imprecations of David are sometimes urged as an objection to the doctrine of inspiration. But, so far from being an objection, we know not how to account for these imprecations, in the connections in which they stand, and in consistency with the acknowledged good character of David, but by supposing him inspired. If he spoke of his own mind and heart, and mingled up his imprecations, as we sometimes find them, with the highest strains of devotional feeling, this certainly was very strange. It was unaccountable. But when we regard him as an inspired prophet of God,—standing in the place of God; the visible head, under God, of the theocracy; and denouncing, by divine inspiration, the judgments of God against the enemies of his church and people,—the case assumes a very different aspect. The inspiration of the writer, instead of creating a difficulty, relieves one. The mystery of the case is in great measure removed.

11. It is said, finally, that Paul, in some places, expressly *disclaims* a divine inspiration: "To the rest speak I, *not the Lord*. If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away." "Concerning virgins, *I have no commandment of the Lord;* yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy" (1 Cor. vii. 12, 25). In these passages the apostle disclaims, as it seems to me, not divine inspiration, but his having any *express*

divine command to be enforced. He was not inspired to lay *positive injunctions* upon the Corinthians, in respect to these matters, as from God, but rather to give his *judgment*, his *advice*. "Herein I give my *advice*," etc. He also tells us that *he thinks* he has the Spirit (1 Cor. vii. 40). And if Paul thought that he had the Spirit, who shall say or think that he had not?

There is another passage which is sometimes quoted to disprove the inspiration of Paul. "That which I speak, *I speak not after the Lord*, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting" (2 Cor. xi. 17). The apostle here speaks, *not after the Lord;* that is, not after the Lord's *example*, not after the *usual manner* of the Lord, without disclaiming at all a divine inspiration. He may have been plenarily inspired, and yet not speak after the usual manner of the Lord.

The full inspiration of the Scriptures, as here explained, proved, and vindicated, is a doctrine of great practical importance. It is so at all times, but more especially at this time, when such insidious and persevering efforts are made to wrest it from us. If the Bible is not inspired in the sense explained, if it is not *all* inspired, then it is not an infallible standard of truth and duty, and nothing can be certainly known or established by it. We may think it a good book, a remarkable book, the work of good and honest men; and yet, if not inspired, it is marked with imperfections, of which its readers must judge for themselves. We may believe that it contains revelations from God; but if it is not an inspired book, if it is not all inspired, then who shall tell us what particular parts are inspired, and what not; how much to receive as the word of God, and how much to impute to the ignorance or the device of man? One passage may seem unreasonable to me, and I may reject it, as constituting no part of the revelation. For the same reason, my neighbor may reject another passage. In this way the whole Bible may be rejected by one or another, while it is professedly received. Most of the old English infidels professed to respect the Bible, and to receive certain portions of it as from God, while they adopted principles which went to undermine and destroy it as a rule of life.

If the Bible is not inspired, even as to its language, then it

does not come to us duly *authenticated*, as the word and the law of God. In all authoritative communications or laws, it is important that we have the precise words of the lawgiver. So it is with human laws. The judge on the bench must have the precise words of the law, or he cannot interpret them. The people, too, must have the law correctly before them, or they cannot tell what it requires. Suppose one of our legislatures should undertake to frame a code of laws, but instead of writing them down themselves, or causing them to be written under their own inspection, should leave it to the reporters, in different parts of the house, to take down the substance, or so much of them as they could recollect, and publish them in the newspapers. These reporters might be honest and capable men; and yet, who would regard their notes as laws? Who could determine whether they had been correctly reported, or whether they expressed the real sense of the legislature?

In matters such as these, we want, I repeat, the *matured words* of the lawgiver. And just so in respect to the Bible. The Bible purports to be a code of laws, coming down to us from the great Lawgiver of the universe, and binding directly on our consciences and hearts. But, in order that it may be duly authenticated,—may be a rule of life to us here and of judgment hereafter,—we must have the very words of God. A merely human record of his truth and will cannot bind us. We must have a Bible, the whole of which is given by the inspiration of God, or we have no standard by which to walk, or on which to rely.

LECTURE XI.

THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE.

Before dismissing our inquiries in regard to the Scriptures, it may be well to devote a few moments to the general subject of *interpretation*. "The creed of the Christian," says the author of the Natural History of Enthusiasm, "is the fruit of exposition. To ascertain the true meaning of the words and phrases used by those who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, is the single aim of the studies of the theologian. *Interpretation is his sole function.*" Though the language here used is strong, and may require some qualification, yet it conveys much truth. The science of interpretation, more especially in its application to the Sacred Writings, is one of paramount importance. True, this science, like many other good things, has been abused; yet this is no valid argument against its legitimate use. Let it be employed, as it ever should be, faithfully, honestly, and in the fear of God, and Christians have nothing to apprehend from it. It can be productive of no other than good results.

All Protestants profess to receive the Bible as capable of being understood, and as their sole and sufficient rule of faith and duty. Hence all are interested alike to *understand* the Bible; to apply to it correct principles of *interpretation*, as they would to any other book; and ascertain what is really "the mind of the Spirit."

In discussing the subject before us, let me call your attention to the three following propositions:

I. There are established principles of interpreting language, which all men continually apply, and by which they abide, on ordinary subjects.

II. These principles are strangely departed from by many in interpreting the Bible.

III. It is of the last importance that we adhere to them, in their application to the Bible, as well as to other books.

I design not here to go into a scientific statement and illustration of the established principles of interpretation. These can be best studied in books appropriated to the subject. A moment's thought will satisfy any person that there *are* such principles, and that, whether conscious of it or not, men continually apply them, and abide by the application. Your neighbor comes to you with some interesting article of intelligence. He tells his story; you understand him; you make reply, and he understands you. But how is this done, unless you and he have some common principles of interpreting language, which both (perhaps unconsciously) apply, and by the application of which you both abide? Or you receive a letter from an absent friend. You read and understand it; and you return an answer, which he reads and understands. Here, again, is an instance in which you both apply some known and established principles of interpretation, and in which you abide by the application. But if your friend should write you that he was dangerously sick, and you should insist that this meant that he was very poor in point of property, or in a very melancholy state of mind, and should return answer accordingly, you and he would in this case fail of applying common principles of interpreting language; and you can easily conceive of the surprise which would follow.

One of your neighbors, for a satisfactory consideration, gives you a deed of a valuable piece of land. You understand it perfectly, and so does he, and both are satisfied; but this is only because you both interpret the instrument according to some common and established principles. Should your neighbor depart from these principles, and insist that the deed to you and your heirs forever meant only a lease for a limited period, contention and confusion would be the consequence.

Take another instance: A number of you agree to form a society for the promotion of some favorite object. You adopt a constitution, the stipulations of which you all understand, and by which all consent to be governed. Here, again, you have applied common principles of interpretation, and expect to abide by the application. But suppose, on experiment, that one of

the members understands the most important article in the constitution in a manner very different from the rest of you. He has assented to the article, and is willing to assent; but, then, he insists that he has a right to put his own meaning upon the terms, and his meaning is just the opposite of yours. Here, again, you have no common principles of interpretation, and the result, as before, is contention and confusion.

These familiar illustrations, the number of which might be increased indefinitely, may serve to show that *there are established principles of interpreting language*, which are sufficiently understood, and in common concerns are continually applied. Without them we could not hold conversation with our families, or correspond with absent friends, or transact the most necessary affairs of life. Without them society could not be formed; or, if formed, the frame of it could not be held together. Indeed, without established principles of interpreting language, we might as well have no language, as the power of holding intercourse by means of it would be taken away.

These principles are essentially the same in all languages. Their object is to fix and settle the meaning of the words and phrases which go to constitute a discourse. In cases of doubt, they require us to take into consideration the nature of the subject discussed; the connection in which the questionable words occur; the purposes, feelings, circumstances, and opinions of the writer or speaker; and the genius and idioms of the language which he uses; and by all these means to judge impartially and truly as to the sense intended to be conveyed;—not what we wish the sense to be, or think it ought to be, but *what it is*.

My second proposition is, that from these established principles of interpreting language, which all sufficiently understand, which all apply in common life, and which constitute the very basis of social intercourse, numbers strangely depart in interpreting the Bible. Some do this in accommodation to their *wishes*. They wish to polish and improve what appears to them the rough features of the Bible,—to round off its sharp points, to soften down the strictness of its requisitions and the harshness of its threatenings; to remove in a measure its severe

restraints. They wish it to speak a somewhat different language from that which appears upon the open face of it; and they flatter themselves, at length, that it does speak a different language; that a softer and more palatable meaning may be put upon the terms.

Some depart from established principles, in interpreting the Bible, in accommodation to their *delinquencies*. If the Bible means what it seems to mean, they fall greatly and fearfully short of it, and have reason to feel themselves reproved and alarmed. But such feelings are not comfortable; they wish to be rid of them; and what is to be done? To bring their characters up to the strict demands of the Bible, they are not willing; and consequently an effort must be made to bring the Bible down to them. And after much ingenious labor, perhaps they think they have succeeded. "The Bible does not require so much as it seems to require. It does not threaten so severely as it seems to threaten. The standard is not so high as at first view it appears. What would be discouraging and terrifying, if interpreted strictly, may, by a little necessary qualification, be made a very comfortable rule of life."

Persons sometimes depart from established principles, in interpreting the Bible, in accommodation to their *systems*. Their system of religion is already established. It is, in their view, complete and perfect. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. And they go to the Bible, not so much to ascertain what it really means, as to bring it to an accordance with their preconceived views. And with this object before them, the declarations of Scripture are of little force. For if too long, they can be easily shortened; or if too short, they can be prolonged. The Bible must be made to conform to their systems, and not their systems to conform to the Bible.

Others depart from established principles, in interpreting the Bible, from a disposition *to lean to their own understandings*. They think themselves capable of determining not only what the Bible means, but what it ought to mean. And if it does not seem to mean what, in their judgment, it ought to mean, then it must be made to conform to their judgment. It must be nar-

rowed or widened, prolonged or curtailed, till it comes to speak a language which seems to them reasonable.

In the respects here alluded to, persons do not treat any other book or writing as they treat the Bible. If they did, they might wrest it as easily as the Bible; and they would have no more reason to find fault with it than they now pretend to have to find fault with the Bible. For example, the Bible ascribes to our Lord Jesus Christ the names, the attributes, the works, and the worship of the Supreme Being. He is repeatedly called God and Jehovah. He is said to know all things, to have made all things, to uphold all things, and to be an object of worship to saints on earth, and to angels in heaven. But some men apply principles of interpretation to the Bible by which they satisfy themselves that this does not prove, or mean, that Christ is a divine person; that it is all very consistent with his being no more than a mortal man. Now, let these persons take these same principles of interpretation, which they apply to the Bible, and by which they bring out this result, and apply them to the Athanasian Creed, or the Assembly's Catechism, and they might prove just as well that neither of these formularies teach the proper divinity of Christ. The same glosses and interpretations which would take the divinity of Christ out of the Bible, would take it out of any Trinitarian Creed or publication in the world.

Again: the inspired writers have much to say respecting the devil and his angels. They speak of fallen spirits as *real beings*, who have long been concerned in the affairs of this world, from whom we have much to fear, and against whom it becomes us to watch and to strive. But some persons apply principles of interpretation to the Bible, by which they satisfy themselves that there is no devil, and that the Bible does not teach the existence of any such being. Now I fearlessly aver, if the Bible does not teach the doctrine of fallen spirits, no other book, interpreted after the same manner, does teach it, or can teach it. The same principles of interpretation that would take this doctrine out of the Bible, would take it out of any other book that ever was written, or can be written.

Take another example. The Bible teaches the endless punishment of the wicked,—that they "shall go away into everlast-

ing punishment;" that they shall "depart accursed into everlasting fire," where "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," and where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." But some persons apply principles of interpretation to the Bible, by which they satisfy themselves that this language does not mean that the wicked shall be punished forever, or that they shall be punished at all in the future world. *Everlasting* signifies a limited duration; the *worm*, the *fire*, the *punishment* are the afflictions of this life; and *hell* means only the valley of Hinnom—a smoking, polluted valley near Jerusalem. Now, it is remarkable that these principles of interpretation which, when applied to the Bible, make it teach universal salvation, if applied to any other work in favor of future punishment, would cause it to teach the same doctrine. Take, for instance, President Edwards' sermon on "The Eternity of Hell Torments." The same modes of interpretation which would make the Bible a Universalist book, would make this a Universalist sermon. *The eternity of hell torments:* what does this mean? Why, *eternity* means a limited duration; and *hell torments* denote certain pains and penalties which were once endured in the valley of Hinnom. There is nothing, therefore, in the *title* of this sermon, or in the sermon itself, interpreted after this manner, which need offend the ear of the most sensitive Universalist.

Believers in the doctrine of universal salvation are sometimes displeased when they hear eternal punishment insisted on from the pulpit. But why displeased? What is *eternal punishment*, according to their interpretation of these Scripture terms? It means nothing more than temporal sufferings,—the afflictions of this life; and surely they ought to be willing to hear of the afflictions of the present life.

I make these remarks not to throw lightness over a serious and awful subject, but to expose the miserable, trifling manner in which many persons allow themselves to treat the Holy Bible; to show how differently they *interpret* the Bible from what they do any other book or language. Let any other book be tortured, as the Bible is, to bring it into conformity to the interests, the inclinations, and the prejudices of men, and it may be tortured

as easily as the Bible. Let the language of common life be subjected to the same ordeal, and it would cease to be intelligible language, and a social intercourse through the medium of it would no longer be possible.

The way is now prepared to urge, in the third place, the importance of adopting, and adhering to, the same principles of interpretation in regard to the Bible which we apply to ordinary language and to other books. The Bible was written, not for the benefit of the learned and critical only, but for the plain and common reader. It was made, therefore, a plain book; and was designed to be interpreted in a plain, common-sense way, according to the ordinary use of language. Such being the case, unless the Bible is interpreted in this way, it is virtually *altered*. There are two ways in which the Bible may be altered. The one is by literally adding to it, or taking from it; the other is by suffering its contents to remain, and misinterpreting them: and there are many persons who would not dare attempt the former, who very readily perpetrate the latter. Here is a passage which, in its plain, obvious meaning, teaches a particular doctrine. If, now, instead of receiving this doctrine, I misinterpret the passage, and put quite another construction upon it, what do I better than though I had first blotted out the passage, and then written down another, according to my own views? The mere words and letters of a verse in the Bible are of no importance, separate from the meaning. If, then, by false interpretation, I alter the meaning, I am chargeable with altering the Bible, although the words and letters may remain the same.

In our previous Lectures we have been considering the evidences of divine revelation, and thus fortifying the Bible against the assaults of open enemies. All this is well, so far as it goes; but it does not meet altogether the exigencies of the present time. Our great danger, at this day, is not so much that of an open rejection of the Bible, — of having its chapters and verses literally torn from us, — as of having its *sense*, its *true meaning* taken away, and a false one substituted. Give to the enemies of the Bible all the latitude of interpretation which they desire, and not the most virulent among them ever need be an avowed

infidel. Not one among them ever would take *the name* of infidel, so long as it was for his credit and interest to avoid it. The work of interpreting the Holy Scriptures is a vastly responsible work; while the sin of misinterpreting, and so altering them, is a very heinous sin. Our only safety in this respect is to be honest; take the Bible as it is; apply to it the plain principles of interpretation, as we would to any other book, and then abide the result. Yes, whether it accords with our systems, our wishes, our prejudices, or not, *we must abide the result.*

The importance of so treating the Bible will further appear if we consider that this is the only way in which Christians can ever be brought to anything like a uniformity of religious sentiment. Why is it that persons do not differ as widely respecting the doctrines of Pelagius, or Augustine, or Calvin, or Socinus, as respecting the doctrines of the Bible? Not because these authors wrote more explicitly and plainly than the inspired penmen. This is not the reason. But human authors are not regarded as of binding authority. Hence, if persons do not like them, they may reject them, and forfeit nothing. They have no temptations, therefore, to misinterpret them. And the consequence is, that nearly all readers, whether they approve them or not, interpret and understand them alike.[1] Now, let persons go to the Bible in the same way, with no end in view but simply to understand it; let them apply to it the same general principles of interpretation as they would to any other book; and in nearly every case they would come to the same conclusions respecting its import. They might differ in regard to some small matters, which distance of time and place had rendered

[1] Two classes of facts may be adduced, showing that the true reason for the differences of opinion which are entertained respecting the import of the Bible has been here assigned. The first is, that those persons who have cast off the Bible, so as no longer to consider it of binding authority,—as, for instance, the old English Deists, and the German Rationalists,—have usually understood it much in the same manner, and in the sense, of the Orthodox. Thus Bolingbroke says, "These doctrines of Calvin are certainly the doctrines of the Bible; and if I believe the Bible, I must believe them." And Prof. Gabler says, "An impartial view of Biblical theology, as a history of the doctrines of the New Testament, must, in its nature, *be pretty much orthodox.*" The second class of facts to which I refer is, that other writings, when they come to be held as of binding authority, are as variously interpreted as the Bible. Witness the Articles of the Church of England, respecting which the members of that church are quite as far from being agreed as they are respecting the Book of God.

obscure; but, in all essential points, the generality of Christians would be agreed, and uniformity of sentiment would be restored.

And this, it is believed, is the only way in which it ever will or can be restored. While persons go to the Bible encumbered with their prejudices, and determined to make it speak according to their preconceived views, it is impossible that they should understand it, or be agreed respecting it. For, going to the Bible in this way, the reader directly encounters passages which, in their plain meaning, are offensive to him. "If this verse means what it seems to say, what will become of my favorite system? I must change my sentiments, change my meeting, and incur the reproach of joining some other denomination, or I must put some other meaning upon this strange verse of the Bible." As he reads on he finds, perhaps, another passage which censures and condemns his course of life. "This sentence, as it reads, is too strict for me. I cannot live up to it. It would seem to make me a great sinner, which surely I am not; and therefore some other meaning must be given to it." As this man reads farther, he meets, it may be, with still greater difficulties. He meets with passages which represent him as not in a safe condition. He is in absolute danger of losing his soul. "But this cannot be true; the Bible does not mean so;" and hence some other interpretation must be put upon the words.

Now, this is but a specimen of the manner in which many persons allow themselves to treat the Holy Bible; and, treating it in this way, there is no difficulty in seeing why they do not understand it alike. How should they understand it alike, unless they all agreed to misinterpret it, and to do it after the same manner? The Bible is sufficiently plain in its annunciations,—as plain as any religious book; and if all who read it would go to it with simplicity of purpose, with the intent to understand its meaning, and would apply to it the ordinary principles of interpretation, as they do to other books, they could not essentially misunderstand it, and would soon be agreed respecting it.

But especially is it to be remembered that this is the only

safe mode of treating the Bible. The Bible, as I have before shown, is a *revelation from God;* and however it may be regarded by us, *it will stand.* "The unbelief of men cannot make the Word of God of no effect;" and no more can the false interpretations of men make the Word of God of no effect. We may think that we have set aside a passage of Scripture, in accommodation to our views and wishes; but we deceive ourselves in this respect. The passage stands just as it did before, and we must abide by it, whether we will or no. We may think the requisitions of the Bible too strict, or its denunciations too terrible, and may endeavor to soften them in accomodation to our feelings. But the requisitions of the Bible must stand, and by them we must be tried and judged, whether we live up to them or not. And the denunciations of the Bible must stand, and impenitent triflers feel all their dreadful import, whether they believe them or not. It is, then, our wisdom, our duty, our safety, to take the Bible as it is; receive it in its obvious meaning, however severely it may reprove or condemn us; and make it our study, not to conform the Bible to our wishes, but to conform our wishes, our hearts, our whole characters, to the holy precepts of the Word of God.

Unless we will receive and treat the Bible after this manner, it might be as well for us if we had no Bible, and perhaps better. For what good can the Bible do us, if we only trifle with it? What good can the Bible do us, if, instead of making *it* the standard, and conforming our opinions and characters to it, we set up something else as the standard, and only go to the Bible that we may bend it to our wishes? What good can an *altered* Bible do us? And we have seen that the Bible *is* altered, just so far as it is misinterpreted. What good can false instructions, false precepts, false promises and encouragements do us? And yet the Bible is falsified if it is falsely interpreted. No, my young brethren, if we need any Bible, we need the *true* Bible. We need it as God made it; and we need to interpret it in a plain, honest, common-sense way, as we would any other book or writing in which we felt greatly interested, and of which we were sincerely desirous to ascertain the sense.

There may be some in these days who, having heard so much about the obscurity of Scripture, and the necessity there is for exegesis and criticism, have come to feel that the Bible is a sealed book to them. It is above their learning, above their comprehension, and they may well be excused in neglecting it. But it follows, from what has been said, that this impression is as unfounded as it is dangerous. The Bible is a plain book, was intended for common use, and is to be interpreted on the same principles as other books intended for common use. The obvious meaning is, in all ordinary cases, the true meaning, and can be apprehended by the common reader. You can understand your neighbor when he comes to you on an errand; you can understand your correspondent when he writes to you on business; you can understand your minister when he preaches to you a plain discourse; and if properly disposed to receive the truth, you can just as well understand the plain preaching of Christ, and the plain writings of the apostles and evangelists. These writings—as to all essential, practical purposes—are within the comprehension of a child, and are important to be studied and pondered by us, *in the temper of children*. This is the very spirit in which the Bible can best be understood; and it is from the want of this spirit, more than from any other cause, that such various and contradictory interpretations have been given to it. I will even go farther, and say that the Bible should be studied and pondered by those who are in *literal childhood*. The youth in the Bible-class, the child of ordinary capacity in the Sabbath-school, can understand his Saviour when he says, "If any man love me, he will keep my commandments"; "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish": "For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment": "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Surely this is sufficiently plain. What is the difficulty in understanding such plain language as this?

Let all remember, in conclusion, that this Bible, about which so much has been said in this and in the previous Lectures, is a solemn, awful book. It is solemn to have it in our hands and houses. It is solemn to read or hear its important mes-

sages. Who would not be solemnly affected if he should hear the Almighty speaking to him in an audible voice from the skies? Yet the Almighty is speaking to us as really and as solemnly in the Bible as though he addressed us directly from the heavens. Let us beware, then, how we trifle with his words. "The word that I have spoken unto you," saith Christ, "*the same shall judge you at the last day.*" Among the books then opened, as the rule of final judgment, will be that holy book of which you have now been hearing. Shall it be opened to testify in your favor, or against you? Shall it be opened to your confusion and condemnation, or to your unspeakable and eternal joy?

LECTURE XII.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

Having shown, in our previous Lectures, that the Bible is the Word of God, and that its testimony, as such, is to be received, we proceed to inquire as to the *purport* of that testimony. What does the Bible teach? What is that system of doctrine and duty which it reveals? And, first of all, what are the teachings of Scripture respecting Christ? What kind of personage *was* he,—*is* he? The subject before us is *the teachings of Scripture respecting the person of Christ.*

I. The Scriptures represent Christ as a *divine person;* and by this we mean, not that our Saviour is an exalted *created* being, sometimes called God, in the Arian sense of the term;—nor that he is *derived* divinity, partaking of the eternal substance of the Father, but having emanated from him in time, in the semi-Arian sense;—but that he is *properly God, equal with the Father*, and possessed, like him, of all divine attributes and glories. Such we understand to be the testimony of Scripture, in respect to Christ; a portion of which testimony I shall briefly exhibit.

1. In the Scriptures we find *divine attributes* ascribed to Christ, such as omnipotence, omnipresence, unchangeableness, eternal existence, etc. He speaks of himself expressly as *the Almighty.* "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which was, which is, and which is to come, *the Almighty*" (Rev. i. 8). He is said to know all things. "Now we are sure that *thou knowest all things.*" "Lord, *thou knowest all things;* thou knowest that I love thee" (John xvi. 30; xxi. 17). He is declared also to be *immutable.* "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever" (Heb. xiii. 8). He is represented as being pres-

ent, at the same instant, on earth and in heaven; or, which is the same, as being omnipresent. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man *which is in heaven*" (John iii. 13). The eternity of Christ is set forth in a passage already quoted. He is the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come."

2. In the Scriptures, such *names* and *epithets* are applied to Christ, as can import nothing less than supreme divinity. He is called not only God, as in John i. 1, but "the mighty God" (Is. ix. 6), "the great God" (Tit. ii. 13), "the true God" (1 John v. 20), the "God over all, blessed forever" (Rom. ix. 5). He is also styled "Jehovah," "Jehovah of hosts," "Jehovah our righteousness," "Lord of all," "the Lord from heaven," "the King of kings and Lord of lords." The Jehovah which Isaiah saw, "sitting upon a throne high and lifted up," whose train filled the heavenly temple, was no other than the Lord Jesus Christ. (Compare Is. vi. 1 with John xii. 41.) "This is his name whereby he shall be called, *Jehovah our righteousness*" (Jere. xxiii. 6).

3. *Divine works* are in Scripture ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ; such as creating, upholding, and governing all things: performing miracles, forgiving sins, judging the world, etc. "*All things were made by him*, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John i. 3). "*By him were all things created*, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created *by him*, and *for him*, and he is *before* all things, and *by him all things consist*" (Col. i. 16, 17). Christ is said to possess all power, in heaven and on earth. The government is on his shoulders (Mat. xxviii. 18. Is. ix. 6). He forgave sins, while here on the earth; and raised the dead; and shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing (2 Tim. iv. 1).

4. In the Scriptures, *divine worship* is ascribed to Christ. Stephen prayed to Christ in his last moments, and commended to him his departing spirit (Acts vii. 59, 60). Paul often prayed to the Lord Jesus. Indeed, the early Christians were

distinguished as those who "called on the name of the Lord"; or (which is the same) prayed to Christ. In times yet future, we are assured that "at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth" (Phil. ii. 10). When the heavens were opened to the view of the beloved disciple, he saw Christ worshipped there, with all possible reverence and devotion. "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and the four and twenty elders, *fell down before the Lamb,* having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of Saints. And they sang a new song, saying: Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and *unto the Lamb*, forever and ever" (Rev. v. 8–13). Such was the grand chorus of praise which John heard sung to the Lamb in heaven. Such is the pure and exalted worship which is there ascribed to him. It is the same which is ascribed "to him that sitteth upon the throne," that is, to the Father. It is such, surely, as cannot, without the most offensive idolatry, be ascribed to any other than a divine person.

5. Our Saviour is represented, in the Scriptures, *as claiming to be God*, and *claiming for himself divine honors*. "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." "I and my Father are one" (John x. 30; xiv. 9, 10). "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which was, which is, and which is to come, the

Almighty" (Rev. i. 8). "I am he who searcheth the reins and the heart" (Rev. ii. 23).

Our Saviour's consenting to *receive* the worship of men on earth, and of saints and angels in heaven, is a manifest claim, on his part, to be God. Would any holy *creature*, however exalted, consent to receive such worship for a moment? When John was about to fall down and worship a ministering angel, the heavenly messenger promptly forbade him. "See thou do it not. *Worship God*" (Rev. xxii. 9).

While our Saviour was on the earth, "he thought it not robbery to be equal with God"; and so numerous and manifest were his claims to divinity, that his enemies took occasion to say: "Thou being a man, *makest thyself God.*"

To all this it has been objected that, in addressing the Father, Christ calls HIM *the only true God.* "This is life eternal, that they may know thee, *the only true God*, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). That the Father is not here styled *the true God*, to the exclusion of the divine nature of the Son, is evident from another passage in the writings of John, where Christ is expressly called "*the true God* and eternal life" (1 John v. 20). The gods excluded, in the first passage, are undoubtedly *the idols of the heathen.* The proper sense of the passage may be given thus: "This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God"—in distinction from all the gods of the nations—"and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

I need add no more in proof of our Saviour's divinity. We have the same evidence, in kind, from Scripture, that Christ is God, as we have that the Father is God; and to reject this evidence in reference to Christ, is to put it out of our power to prove, from the Bible, that there is any God at all.

I hardly need say, that the divinity of Christ has been a disputed doctrine, almost from the apostolic age. It was rejected by the Ebionites, in the second century, who believed Christ to be no greater than Moses. It was rejected by the Gnostics of the second and third centuries. It was rejected by the Arians and semi-Arians of the fourth and fifth centuries. It was rejected by the Socinians of the sixteenth century. It is rejected by Unitarians of every class in modern times. Nevertheless,

the foundation of God standeth sure. The unbelief of men cannot make the truth of God of none effect. The proof of our Saviour's divinity is *in the Bible*, and by no dint of honest interpretation can it be got out of it. It can never be removed or set aside, until the Bible is discarded with it. In regard to the person of Christ, I remark,

II. That he was man as well as God. The fact of his *humanity* is incontestible; and this fact is as necessary to the scheme of evangelical religion as is that of his divinity. Christ is called a man more than fifty times, in the New Testament. He was born, lived, ate, drank, slept and awaked, suffered, died, and was buried, like other men. He had a human soul, as well as a human body. He "increased *in wisdom*," as well as in stature, and had all the affections and passions of a sinless human being. Indeed, we have as much evidence of the proper humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we have of the humanity of Peter, Paul, or John, or any other individual spoken of in the Bible.

If any ask here *how* divinity and humanity were so united in Christ, as to constitute but one person, I answer that *I cannot tell how*. The *quo modo* of this union is not revealed. It is a mystery. And here, precisely, lies the mystery of the incarnation; not in the *fact* of it, but in the *manner*. The fact that our Saviour was both God and man is abundantly taught in the Scriptures. It is taught, not only in its different parts, but in various passages, where the whole doctrine is exhibited together. "*The Word was made flesh*, and dwelt among us" (John i. 14). "*God was manifest in the flesh*" (1 Tim. iii. 16). "Unto us *a child is born;* unto us *a son is given;* and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *the mighty God*" (Is. ix. 6). The *fact* of a mysterious union of divinity and humanity in the person of Christ, I repeat, is clearly revealed; and as such is to be received. The *manner* of this union is not revealed, and with it we have nothing to do. It is among the secret things which belong only to God.

Nor does the mystery of the incarnation, in this view, stand alone. It is on the same footing precisely with a thousand other

things. How many things do we believe as facts, the manner of which we cannot understand or explain? Who can explain *how* grass grows in the summer? Yet we believe that it does grow. What man can tell us *how* soul and body are united in his own person? Yet we believe that they are united. And just so in regard to the person of Christ. The *facts* of the case we understand and believe, as God hath revealed them in his Word. But as to the *manner* of the union between the Divine and the human, we know nothing, and can explain nothing. Where the Word of God is silent, we may well hold our peace.

But it is said that the incarnation of Christ is something more than a mystery; it is an *impossibility*. It is palpably inconsistent with the *unchangeableness of God*. For God to become man involves a mighty change in his very *nature*, which is impossible. But how does the objector know that the incarnation of Christ,—the Word becoming flesh,—involves any change in the nature or attributes of the Supreme Being? Has he penetrated far enough into the deep things of God to be sure of this? May not God manifest himself in the flesh,—veil his Divinity in humanity,—and yet be the same God? The sun, which shone so brightly yesterday, is shut in by thick clouds to-day; still we do not doubt that it is the same sun. So the great Sun of Righteousness, while veiled beneath the cloud of mortal flesh, may have been the same glorious Being, essentially, as before.

The proper humanity of Christ, like his Divinity, has often been denied. There were those near the close of the apostolic age, who denied that Jesus had a real human *body;* and this led the Apostle John to insist so strenuously, that Jesus Christ had come *in the flesh*. The Gnostics, the Arians, and semi-Arians, all denied that Christ had a human *soul*. Though differing in other respects, they were agreed in this, that Christ was neither God nor man, but held a rank somewhere between the two.

III. Christ is not only God and man united in one person, but he is the constituted *Mediator* between God and man. The Mediatorship of Christ is repeatedly brought to view in the Scriptures. "He is the Mediator of the New Testament" (Heb. ix. 15). "There is one Mediator between God and man, the man

Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). As a Mediator, Christ acts under a commission from his Father, and is *officially* subordinate to him. He taught what he was sent to teach; he did what he was sent to do; he suffered what he was sent to suffer. He received a kingdom from the Father; and when the mediatorial work is accomplished, he will deliver up his kingdom to the Father again (1 Cor. xv. 24). All this does not imply that, in *nature*, Christ is not equal with the Father, but that *officially—mediatorily*—in accomplishing the great work of our redemption—he is subordinate to him.

It is in his mediatorial capacity that Christ executes the three grand offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. As Mediator he is the great teacher and light of the world. As Mediator, he has made expiation for his people, and ever liveth to intercede for them. As Mediator, he is King in Zion, and is overruling all things for his church. As Mediator, he will descend to raise the dead, and judge the world in the final day. We can never take in the whole doctrine of Christ, unless we conceive of him in his mediatorial character and work. Many of those passages, which are quoted to prove Christ's inferiority to the Father, merely set forth his official, mediatorial subordination. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." "I seek not mine own will, but the will of my Father which hath sent me." "I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." In these and the like passages, Christ speaks as Mediator; acknowledging, not an inferiority of nature, but merely an *official subordination*. As Mediator, the Father sent him, and instructed him; and throughout his entire mediatorial work, he follows the instructions, and obeys and suffers the will of his Father.

Those who read the whole Bible, and are willing to accept its entire testimony respecting Christ, will find that he there speaks, and is spoken of, in three different capacities. First, as *God*. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which was, which is, and which is to come, the Almighty." "I am he who searcheth the reins and the heart." "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God." "This is the true God and eternal life." Secondly, as *man*. "Jesus of Nazareth, a *man* approved

of God among you." "After me cometh a *man* who is preferred before me." "This *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses." Thirdly, as Mediator between God and man. "Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant." "There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

The whole testimony of Scripture concerning Christ, I have sometimes compared to a lock, so ingenuously constructed that but one key can be made to fit it. Apply this key, that Christ is God, and nothing else, and it does not suit. It can be turned a little way, but cannot be brought round. It meets exactly those passages which speak of Christ's divinity, but is inconsistent with others which speak of his humanity. Apply next the Socinian key, that Christ is a man and nothing else. Now this, like the last, turns very well a little way, but no art or strength can bring it round. It meets exactly those passages which speaks of Christ's humanity, but contradicts others which assert his divinity. Try next the Arian or semi-Arian key—those theories which represent Christ as neither God nor man, but as occupying a place between the two; and these, it will be found, turn easily no where. They grate hardly and harshly, threatening lock, or key, or both, with every move that is made. They meet neither the passages which speak of our Saviour's humanity, nor that other class which speak of his Divinity. But there is yet another key,—the good old Trinitarian key,—which represents that Christ is both God and man, and Mediator between God and men. We insert this, and we find that it moves easily everywhere. It turns through all the wards of the lock, meeting and harmonizing all. This, then, beyond all question, is the right key. This is the revelation which God hath given us of his Son—*the truth*, as it is in Jesus.

Before closing, it may be well to offer a few remarks respecting a disputed phraseology occurring often in the Scriptures,—*the Son of God*.

1. Christ is called the Son of God on account of his *miraculous conception*. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; *therefore*, that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called *the Son of God*" (Luke i. 35).

2. Christ is "declared to be the Son of God with power, by his *resurrection from the dead*" (Rom. i. 4). The resurrection of Christ is also spoken of as a fulfilment of what is written in the second Psalm: "Thou art *my Son;* this day have I begotten thee" (Acts xiii. 33).

3. The phrase *Son of God* was evidently understood by the Jews as importing *Divinity*. Accordingly, whenever our Saviour used this phrase, in the high and peculiar sense in which he was accustomed to apply it to himself, they accused him of blasphemy, and were ready to stone him. "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself *the Son of God*" (John xix. 7). "The Jews sought the more to kill him, because he said that God was *his Father*,"— and, of course, that he was *God's Son*, — "making himself *equal with God*" (John v. 18).

The phrase, *Son of God*, is in Scripture frequently applied to Christians, but not in the way or in the sense in which our Saviour applied it to himself. As *he* used it, I am clearly of the opinion that it imports divinity. So the Jews understood it, certainly; and if they were deceived, Christ took no pains to undeceive them.

The question about *the eternal generation of the Son*, seems to be little more than a question of words. The phrase, as explained by its advocates, imports no *proper generation at all*, but merely that the nature of the distinctions between the three persons in the Godhead is such, that the terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, may with propriety be applied to them. And to this view of the case I see no valid objection. There doubtless are good reasons *now* why one of the Divine persons, rather than either of the others, should be called Father; and why another should be called Son; and why the third should be called the Holy Spirit. And as God is unchangeable in his nature and mode of existence, these reasons must have been the same from all eternity. Though the Eternal Three are equal in every divine perfection and attribute, it is not necessary to suppose them, in all their relations and in every particular, *alike*. There may be, and I think there is, something *peculiar* to each, which furnishes a reason or lays a foundation for the

particular part which each has undertaken to perform in the work of our redemption, and for the names appropriated to each in the Scriptures. And if this is all which the advocates of eternal generation believe on the subject, we will not object to the doctrine itself, but only to the phraseology in which they choose to set it forth.

The doctrine of Christ, as here presented, is one of the utmost importance every way. It is important *theologically*. Christ, I hardly need say, is the soul and centre of the entire system of Christian theology. Without *him* and without such views of him as have here been exhibited, no consistent scheme of theology can possibly be constructed. You might as well tear out the sun from the solar system, and leave the harmony of that system unbroken, as remove Christ, — Christ, the God, Man, and Mediator, — from your system of theology, and have any system left.

But the true doctrine of Christ is as important *practically* as it is theologically. We all *need* just such a Saviour as has been set before us, and such a Saviour we *must* have, or we are lost forever. We certainly need a *divine* Saviour. A being anything less than God would be infinitely inadequate to perform the work of redeeming and saving a ruined world. And we as certainly need a *human* Saviour. It behooved Christ, says Paul, "to be made *in all things like unto his brethren*," — in other words, to become a man, — that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." As by man came sin and the curse, so by man they must be taken away. As "by man came death, so by man came also the resurrection of the dead." Had Christ possessed a divine, and not a human nature, he could not have died for sinners; for the divine nature cannot die. Or had he possessed a human, and not a divine nature, he could not, by once offering up himself, have made expiation for a guilty world. Hence, it is not enough to say of the doctrine exhibited in this Lecture, that it is the only one which accords with Scripture and with true Christian theology; it is the only one which presents us with such a Saviour as we need, — *absolutely need*, — a Saviour on whom we may repose our guilty souls forever.

The Saviour here exhibited is one which Christians love to contemplate, — one to whom they can look, under all circumstances, with unmingled satisfaction. They can repose on him with unlimited confidence, because he is *God*. He has blood enough to cleanse them from their sins, and grace enough to bear with their infirmities, and strength to deliver them from all their foes. "He is *able* to save, to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him." At the same time, they can be assured of his sympathy, and can look up to him with the affection of kindred; because he is a *man*. He is their elder brother, — bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh. He has gone before them in all the depths of trial and suffering. "He knows what sore temptations mean, for he has felt the same." The humanity of Christ presents him before us in the most winning, endearing attitude; while his divinity invests him with all the grandeur and majesty of Jehovah.

O that this mysterious and exalted personage may be to each one of us "the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely!" Let us love him, confide in him, obey him, follow him, as we would hope to reign with him in his everlasting kingdom.

LECTURE XIII.

THE PERSONALITY AND DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

By the personality of the Spirit, we do not mean that he is a *Being by himself*, separate from the Father and the Son, and independent of them; for this would be inconsistent with the divine unity.

Nor do we mean that the Spirit is a *personification* of the divine *power*, or of any other divine *attribute* or *influence*. How would the Scriptures read interpreted in this way? "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of a *divine attribute* or *influence*"! "The grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of a *divine attribute* or *influence*" be with you! "Grieve not a *divine attribute* or *influence*"! "Whoever shall speak a word against a *divine attribute* or *influence*, it shall not be forgiven him"! Who will dare subject the Scriptures to such torture as this, for the purpose of bending them into conformity to a system?

Nor do we mean by the personality of the Spirit, that this is a mere name of *office*, or of some peculiar *manifestation*, of the one God in one person. But our meaning is, that there are *personal distinctions* in the Godhead, and that one of these is in Scripture denominated the Holy Spirit.

1. There are *personal distinctions* in the Godhead. This is certain, from the representations of the Bible. Look into the Old Testament. "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become *as one of us*" (Gen. iii. 22). *One of whom*,—if there are no personal distinctions in the *Jehovah Aleim*,—the Lord God? A mysterious personage is often introduced in the Old Testament, called *the angel of Jehovah*. But a comparison of passages shows that this angel or messenger of Jehovah *was*

Jehovah. Such was the angel who communed with Hagar in the desert (Gen. xvi. 13), and who called to Abraham out of heaven, when about to sacrifice his son (Gen. xxii. 16); and who spake to Moses out of the burning bush (Ex. iii. 4, 6). Certainly, the angel or messenger of Jehovah must be a personage distinct from Jehovah; and yet that angel was Jehovah. We are told, also, that "Jehovah rained fire and brimstone *from Jehovah* out of heaven";—a manifest proof of distinctions in the Godhead (Gen. xix. 24).

When we look into the New Testament, proof of the same point clusters around us on every hand. It is as certain as the language of Scripture can make it, that our Lord Jesus Christ, in his *divine nature*, was distinct from the divine nature of the Father; and, of course, that there are personal distinctions in the Deity. "In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word was God; the same was, in the beginning, *with* God" (John i. 1, 3). Here, the divine Word, who was God, and by whom all things were made, is said to have been *with* God, and with him *in the beginning;* importing that there have been distinctions in the Godhead from all eternity. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me, with the glory which I had *with* thee, *before the world was*" (John xvii. 5). The human nature of Christ had no existence before the creation of the world. In this passage, therefore, he refers to his *divine nature*, and he represents it as *from eternity with the Father* in glory;—a certain proof again of eternal distinctions in the Godhead. Let any person read the first ten verses of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and see if a marked and manifest distinction is not set forth there, between the divine nature of the Son and that of the Father. The Son is here represented as the creator and upholder of the world; and yet he is clearly distinguished from the Father, who is speaking of him, who calls him his Son, and at whose right hand the glorified Son is exalted. "When he (the Father) bringeth his first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." This first begotten of the Father must be *distinct* from the Father; and yet he is a proper object of worship to all the angels of God. "Unto the Son he (the Father) saith:

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Here God the Father certainly speaks of the Son in his *divine nature*, calls him God, and yet represents himself as *his* God;—necessarily importing that there are distinctions in the Godhead.

I will adduce but one passage more in proof of the point before us, though it would be easy to adduce hundreds. "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever" (Rev. v. 13). The worship here offered to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, shows that these are both *divine personages*. And yet they are *distinct* personages. It is impossible so to confound them as to make them but one person, without doing the utmost violence to language.

Having thus proved, in opposition to every form and theory of Unitarianism, that there are eternal, personal distinctions in the Godhead, I proceed to show—

2. That one of these personal distinctions is in Scripture denominated *the Holy Spirit;* or in other words, that the Holy Spirit is not a figure of speech, but a *distinct personal agent*. The proof of this rests entirely on the *language*, the *phraseology* of the Bible, and to this point we now direct attention.

"Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In this solemn, sacramental service, the Holy Ghost is joined with the Father and the Son, denoting that he is as really *a person* as either of them. "The grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you" (2 Cor. xiii. 14). Here again the Holy Spirit is represented as a distinct person, and put on equality with the Father and the Son. "One Spirit, one Lord, one God, and Father of all" (Eph. iv. 4). "Through him (Christ) we have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18). "Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 2). In all these passages, and in many others, we have set forth the personal

distinctions in the Godhead, and the Spirit expressly named as constituting one of them.

The personality of the Spirit was clearly manifested at *the baptism of our Saviour*. "The heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended in a *bodily shape*, like a dove upon him; and a voice came from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark i. 10, 11). This heavenly dove was not a personified attribute of God, nor was it the Father manifesting himself in a particular way; for while the Spirit was descending, the Father was speaking in an audible voice from heaven, and the Son was being consecrated to his public ministry in baptism.

The personality of the Spirit is further evident from our Saviour's promises to his disciples: "I (the Son) will pray the Father, and he shall give you *another* Comforter,"—distinct both from myself and the Father,—"that he may abide with you forever, even *the Spirit of truth*." "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name,"—and who, of course, is distinct from both the Father and me,—"he will teach you all things," etc. "When the Comforter is come, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father,"—and consequently cannot be the Father,—"he shall testify of me." "He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." "He will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he shall show you things to come." "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." In all these Scriptures, if the language had been constructed with a view to show the personality of the Spirit in distinction from that of the Father and the Son, I see not how it could have been better adapted for this purpose. The Spirit is here called not only the Comforter, which is a personal agent, but *another Comforter*, distinct both from the Father and the Son, who is to teach, to testify, to reprove, to speak, to hear, to guide, to receive, to show, and, in short, to perform all personal acts.

When the promises of the Saviour began to be fulfilled, and the Spirit came; his intercourse with the disciples, and govern-

ment over them, were manifestly those of a *personal agent*. "The Spirit said unto Philip: Go near and join thyself unto this chariot." "The Spirit said unto Peter, Behold three men seek thee; arise, therefore, and go with them." "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Paul and Barnabas, for the work to which I have called them." "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia." "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden." "Paul and Silas were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia." "They essayed to go into Bythinia, but the Spirit suffered them not."

These passages are but a specimen of the current phraseology of the New Testament, in relation to this matter. And now, I ask, what *meaneth* this language,—what *can* it mean,—if the Holy Ghost is not a distinct personal agent? Occurring as it does, not in a poetic rapture, but in plain, sober narrative and prose, can it be understood as importing anything less than this? What more appropriate language can be selected from the Bible to prove the personality of the Father or the Son?

In different parts of the Bible the Holy Ghost is spoken of as the object of *offence* and *injury*, in a way to denote his personality. Ananias and Sapphira "lied to the Holy Ghost." The ancient Israelites "rebelled and vexed the Holy Spirit." The Jews "always resisted the Holy Ghost." Christians are exhorted not to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God." And what shall be said of *blasphemy* against the Holy Ghost, if he is not a personal agent? "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him" (Matt. xii. 32). Is it not certain from this representation, that if Christ is a person, the Holy Ghost is a person; and that the latter is not inferior in point of dignity to the former?

In various parts of the Bible, the Holy Ghost is said to be sent, to move, to know, to speak, to guide, to lead, to help, to testify, to reveal, to search, to intercede, to prophecy, to work miracles, to sanctify, to bestow gifts, to give life, to be resisted, to be pleased, and vexed, and grieved, and spoken against,—

in short, to do, and to suffer, all that is appropriate to a divine and personal agent.

It is no valid objection to the personality of the Spirit, that the Greek word translated spirit is in the *neuter gender;* for, wherever it refers to the Holy Spirit, the word is used in connection with the *masculine pronouns*,—creating an anomaly in the Greek language, for the apparent purpose of showing that the word, in such connections, stands for a person, and not a thing.[1]

Neither is it any objection to the views which have been exhibited, that the term spirit is sometimes used, by a very common figure, for the *influences* or *operations* of the Spirit. In this sense it is used, when the Spirit is said to be *poured out*, and *shed forth*, and when the Holy Ghost is said to have been given, by the laying on of apostolic hands. (See Acts viii. 17; xix. 6.)

But without dwelling longer on the personality of the Spirit, let us proceed to the question of his *divinity*.

1. The divinity of the Spirit is clearly involved in what has been already said. If there are personal distinctions in the very essence of the Godhead, and if one of these persons is the Holy Spirit, then, obviously, he must be a divine person. No other supposition can possibly be entertained. Then,

2. We find the names *God* and *Jehovah* applied, in Scripture, to the Holy Spirit. Ananias and Sapphira "lied to the *Holy Ghost*"; but it is expressly said that, in so doing, they "lied unto *God*" (Acts v. 4). Christians are said to have been born of *the Spirit;* but this birth of the Spirit is a being born of *God* (John i. 13; iii. 5). The bodies of Christians are moreover represented as temples of *God*, because *the Holy Spirit dwelleth in them* (1 Cor. iii. 16). The Israelites in the wilderness tempted *Jehovah* (Ex. xvii. 17). But it was the *Spirit* whom they vexed and tempted (Is. lxiii. 10). A new covenant was promised by *Jehovah* to his people (Jer. xxxi. 31). But it was the *Holy Spirit* who gave this promise (Heb. x. 15). The *Lord God of Israel* spake by all the holy prophets (Luke

[1] See John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 14; Eph. i. 13, 14.

i. 70). Yet these holy men "spake as they were moved by the *Holy Ghost*" (2 Pet. i. 21).

3. The Holy Spirit is represented as possessing *divine attributes*. He is said to "search all things, even the deep things of God,"—an incontestible proof of his omniscience (1 Cor. ii. 10). He is also expressly denominated "the eternal Spirit" (Heb. ix. 14).

4. The *works* ascribed to the Holy Spirit are proof conclusive of his divinity. The *inspiration of the Scriptures* is a work of the Spirit (2 Pet. i. 21). So also is the conversion of sinners, and the sanctification of believers. And so is the performance of miracles. So purely was this last regarded by the apostles as the work of the Spirit, that the imparting of the Spirit, and the power to work miracles, was with them the same thing. (See Acts xix. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 8–11).

Indeed, so abundant is the evidence from Scripture of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, that this is admitted by most Unitarians. "The Spirit of God," they say, "is God *himself*"; meaning that he is the one God, in one person, whom they worship. We may properly cite this concession, in proof of the *divinity* of the Holy Spirit, while we reject the errors connected with it; viz., a denial of personal distinctions in the Godhead, and the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost.

The personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit is manifestly a doctrine of great importance. It is so *theologically*. It stands in vital connection with the doctrine of the Trinity, and with the mysterious mode of the divine existence. It is directly related, also, to all those doctrines which have respect to the conversion and salvation of souls. The office-work of the Spirit is as essential to our salvation as is that of the Father, or the Son. It is not enough that an atonement has been made for sin, and that, on the ground of the atonement, means have been instituted, and the free offers of the gospel are made and urged. Not a soul will ever embrace these offers, and press into the kingdom of Christ, but through the aids and influences of the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine we have considered is one of vital importance, also, in its bearing on the *hopes* and *consolations* of believers.

Every Christian, who has any adequate sense of his necessities, feels deeply that he needs the constant interposition of the Holy Ghost on his behalf. He needs the Spirit, not only to bring him into the kingdom of Christ, but to *keep* him there;—to enlighten his mind, to quicken his affections, to strengthen him for the performance of duty, to guide and comfort him through all his pilgrimage, and bring him, at length, to his heavenly home. He cannot, therefore, relinquish this doctrine of the Spirit. He clings to it, not merely because he finds it in the Bible, but because it is the life of his soul. Take it from him, and you not only darken, but destroy, his spiritual prospects. You extinguish his hopes, dry up the sources of his consolations, and shroud him in gloom and despair forever.

LECTURE XIV.

THE TRINITY.

The Trinity is the doctrine of three persons, or personal distinctions, in one God. And herein it differs from every form of Unitarianism. Unitarianism is the doctrine of one God in *one* person; Trinitarianism, of one God in *three* persons. Both teach the doctrine of *one God*. Hence the absurdity of the representation, so often made, that Trinitarianism contradicts the unity of God. So far from contradicting the divine unity, Trinitarianism implies it, or rather *includes* it. Men may be Tritheists, or Polyethists, if they will; but Trinitarians they cannot be, without believing in the unity of God.

Trinitarianism does not assert, however, that God is one, and three, in the *same sense;* or that each of the three persons is one, in the sense that all united are one. Either of these propositions would be an absurdity. But the doctrine does assert, that God is in *some* sense one, and in some *other* senses or respects, three; and this statement involves no absurdity. For aught that any created being can show to the contrary, it may be true; and Trinitarians believe that it *is true*. They believe that God has thus revealed to us the mode of his own existence.

The distinctions in the Godhead are commonly called *persons;* and if this word is understood with some necessary qualifications, there is no objection to it. When used in relation to this subject, it cannot mean (what it commonly does) that those to whom it is applied are *entirely separate beings*, like three human persons; for this would be inconsistent with their essential unity. But in *some* sense, and to *some extent*, the divine persons *are* distinct. They are *so far* distinct, that they may properly speak, or be spoken of, in the plural number. They may use

the personal pronouns, *I*, *thou*, and *he*, in reference to each other. They are represented as entering into a covenant, and as holding an infinitely blessed intercourse and communion, one with another. They are said also to discharge different offices and works.

The Trinitarian may not be able to explain, however, the precise nature and extent of these distinctions; because the Bible does not explain them. On this point, a variety of questions may be asked, which he is not at all concerned to answer; and theories may be propounded, which he is not required either to adopt or refute. The only caution to be observed, is to avoid such conceptions of the trinity in God, as will conflict with his essential unity; and such conceptions of his unity, as will exclude the trinity: in other words, to avoid Tritheism on the one hand, and simple Unitarianism on the other.

But as to the *fact* of distinctions in the Godhead, as above stated, the Trinitarian has no doubt. This he holds to be clearly revealed. He holds, too, that these are real and *eternal* distinctions. Not mere names of *operation*, or of *office;* not mere *pageants*, acting a part for the sake of effect; but distinctions, which enter into the very nature of the one God, and are eternal like himself.

This, then, is what we understand by the doctrine of the Trinity: *One God*, existing in *three equal and eternal persons*, or *personal distinctions*, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The first part of the doctrine is that of *the essential unity of God*. But the proof of this need not detain us long. That God is one, is a very reasonable conclusion from the light of nature. It is certain, from the declarations of Scripture. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is *one Lord*" (Deut. vi. 4). "The Lord he is God, *there is none else besides him*" (Deut. iv. 35). "I am the Lord, and there is *none else. There is no God besides me.*" "Is there a God besides me? Yea, *there is no God; I know not any*" (Is. xliv. 8; xlv. 5). "Thou believest there is *one God;* thou doest well. The devils also believe and tremble" (James ii. 19).

That there is a *plurality* of persons, or personal distinctions, in the one God, is also certain from the Scriptures. After what

was said on this point in the last lecture, it will not be necessary to dwell upon it here. The original name of God, in the Old Testament, is in the plural number; and God often applies to himself the plural pronouns. "Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." "The man has become as *one of us*." "Let *us* go down and confound their language." "Whom shall I send, and who will go for *us*?" "The Lord said, Let them show *us* what shall happen." These, certainly, are very remarkable expressions. They were not adopted without design. And the design of them could not have been to lead men into error, but to save them from it. And although, possibly, if they stood alone, no conclusive argument could be drawn from them in proof of personal distinctions in the Godhead, yet, standing as they do in connection with other Scriptures, and accordant as they are with the general current of Scripture representation on the subject, I cannot but think that they do contain, and may be quoted to prove, the important doctrine under consideration.

The plural name of God (*Elohim*) is derived from a verb which signifies to *adjure*, or to *take an oath;* and literally signifies those who have *taken an oath*, or *entered into a covenant;* alluding, as some suppose, to *the eternal covenant of redemption.* And here it may be observed, that the very existence of a covenant of redemption, and all the Scriptures referring to such a covenant, prove incontestibly that there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead. No one person can enter into a proper covenant with himself. A covenant necessarily implies more than one. And if the one God existed in one person only, a covenant of redemption would be impossible.

The doctrine of the Trinity asserts, not only that there are personal distinctions in the Godhead, but that these distinctions are no more nor less than *three.* And this, too, is abundantly evident from the Scriptures, and from what has been established in our previous lectures. No one doubts the proper divinity and personality of the *Father*, the first person in the Trinity. We have before proved that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal *Son of God*, is a divine person. We have also proved the personality and divinity of the *Holy Spirit.* Here then are *three divine*

persons. We never read of a *fourth* person in the Godhead, and have no reason to believe that any such person exists.

In many places in the New Testament (some of which were quoted in my last lecture, and need not be repeated here), the names of the three persons in the Trinity are brought together, and each is exhibited in his own proper office and work. Take the following as examples: "Through him (*Christ*) we have access, by one *Spirit*, unto the *Father*" (Eph. ii. 18). "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the *Father*, through sanctification of the *Spirit*, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of *Christ*" (1 Pet. i. 2). "How much more shall the blood of *Christ*, who, through the eternal *Spirit*, offered himself without spot to God (the *Father*), purge your conscience from dead works" (Heb. ix. 14). "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same *Spirit;* and there are differences of administration, but the same *Lord;* and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God (the *Father*) which worketh all in all" (1 Cor. xii. 4-6).[1]

Evident traces of a Trinity may be found in the mythology of some heathen nations; as in the *Pater*, *Dunamis*, and *Nous* of the Persian Magoi, and the *Brahma*, *Vishnoo*, and *Siva* of the Hindoos. Whether these notions were derived from an original tradition, or from an acquaintance with our sacred books, or from some other source, it is impossible to determine.

It is more important to remark that the doctrine of the Trinity

[1] Dr. Samuel Clarke, who is claimed by the Unitarians as an advocate of their opinions, gives the following summary of the language of Scripture respecting the three persons of the Trinity. "The three persons," he says, "are styled *once*, He which is, which was, and which is to come; the seven spirits which are before the throne; and Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness: *once*, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: *once*, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit: *once*, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: *twice*, the Father, Jesus, and the Spirit: *twice*, the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost: *once*, the Father, Christ, and the Spirit: *once*, the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit: *once*, the Father, the Lord, and the Spirit: *once*, God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit: *once*, He that raised up Jesus from the dead, Jesus, and the Spirit: *once*, the living God, Christ, and the Spirit: *once*, the living God, Christ, and the eternal Spirit: *four times*, God, Jesus, and the Spirit: *once*, God, the Son of God, and the Holy Ghost: *five times*, God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost: *once*, God, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Spirit of holiness: *once*, God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost: *five times*, God, Christ, and the Spirit: *four times*, God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost: *five times*, God, Jesus Christ, and the Spirit: *four times*, God, the Lord, and the Spirit: *twice*, God, his Son, and the Spirit; *once*, God, the Lord, and the Holy Ghost: and *once*, God, Christ, and the eternal Spirit." (Scrip. Doctrine of the Trinity, pp. 383, 384.)

was held and taught by *the earliest Christian Fathers*. They speak often of the proper divinity of the Son and Spirit, and in some instances the three persons are introduced together, much as they are by the apostles. Thus Ignatius represents the apostles as subject "both to Christ, and to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit." And Polycarp says: "I glorify thee (the Father) by the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son; with whom, to thee, and to the Holy Ghost be glory both now, and to all succeeding ages." [1]

Some of the more common objections to the doctrine of the Trinity, such as that it is inconsistent with the divine unity, and is self-contradictory, have been obviated by the explanations already made. As before remarked, so far from being inconsistent with the divine unity, the doctrine of the Trinity necessarily involves it. It is as much a part of this doctrine that God is in some sense *one*, as that he is in some other sense *three*.

Neither is the doctrine thus stated self-contradictory. To say that God is one, and three, in *the same sense*, would be a contradiction. But to say that God is in *some* sense one, and in some *other* sense three, is no contradiction. This *may* be true; and Trinitarians believe, on the authority of Scripture, that it *is* true. Or to put the matter in a little different shape: To say that each person in the Trinity is God, in the sense in which they all constitute one God, would be a contradiction. It would be to say what no intelligent person could believe. But to say that each person in the Trinity is in some sense God, and that, in some other sense of the term, they all constitute one God, is no contradiction. As I said before, this *may* be true; and Trinitarians believe, on the ground of the revelations which God has made of himself, that it *is* true.

It is no uncommon thing to see three one, and one three, in the works of nature and of art. For example: here is a great tree, with a *single trunk*, and three towering, majestic, and equal branches. Now each of these branches is, in *some* sense, a tree, having buds, leaves, sap, wood, bark, and the various attributes of a tree. Yet each branch is not a tree, in the sense in which they all constitute *one* tree. In some sense, here are

[1] See Wake's Apostolical Fathers, pp. 204, 238, 247, 250.

three trees, and in some other sense, there is but one tree. Or here, we may suppose, is a mighty river, made of three equal branches, but pouring itself into the ocean by one wide mouth. Now each of these long branches is a river, and has all the attributes of a river. But each is not a river, in the sense in which they all constitute one river. This great river, like the Deity, is in some sense one, while in some other sense it is three. These United States are one government, made up of thirty or more distinct States. Now each of these States is a government, while they all constitute but one government. Here, then, we have thirty in one, and one in thirty; and yet there is no contradiction.

I do not suppose that these comparisons, or that any earthly comparison, can fully illustrate this mighty subject. But they illustrate it far enough to show (and that is all for which I use them) that the doctrine of the Trinity, properly understood, involves no absurdity, no contradiction whatever. For aught any human being can show to the contrary, it *may be* true; and as the Scriptures so plainly reveal and teach it, we are bound to believe that it *is* true.

It is further objected to the doctrine of the Trinity, that it is confessedly a *mystery* which no one can understand; and hence faith in it can be no better than a blind faith,—a belief without understanding. In reply to this objection, I have three things to say. 1. There is that about the Trinity which we *do* profess to understand. 2. There is that about it which we *do not* profess to understand. 3. Our faith in the doctrine reaches no farther than our understanding of it. We understand it as a *fact*, clearly revealed, that there are three persons, or personal distinctions, in the one God. We believe this great truth as a *fact*. We believe, therefore, what we understand; and we understand what we believe. We do not understand *how* the three persons in the Godhead are one, and the one three. The *mode*, the *manner*, the *how*, of this great fact, we do not understand. Neither as to the *how* of it have we any belief or faith at all. What we do not understand about the doctrine we do not believe, but simply believe the fact, which we do understand.

And in this view,—as remarked in a previous lecture on the incarnation of Christ,—the doctrine of the Trinity stands on the same footing precisely with a thousand other things. The world is full of mysteries, which we believe as facts, of the *quo modo* of which we neither understand nor believe anything.

Again, it is objected by Unitarians that the Trinity is of heathen origin; that the early Christians borrowed it from Plato, or from the Platonic philosophy, and incorporated it into the faith of the church. In replying to this objection, we may refer, first of all, to what has been so abundantly proved, that the doctrine of the Trinity is drawn from *the Bible*, and not from Plato,—from books, many of which were written long before Plato was born. It should be added, secondly, that Plato taught no doctrine at all resembling the Christian Trinity. We speak advisedly on this subject. He tells of triads among the gods, but his triads are all of them inferior affinities,—emanations, directly or indirectly, from the One Supreme.

The New Platonics of the second and third centuries after Christ, in their zeal for a general comprehension, *corrupted* the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity, and introduced their corruptions into the church; and in so doing they laid a foundation for the disputes and controversies of the next five hundred years. Instead of originating the doctrine of the Trinity, the Platonic philosophy sadly corrupted it, and led many to reject it altogether.

It is objected, finally, to the doctrine of the Trinity, that it is an *old*, *obsolete* doctrine. It belongs to a former age. It cannot bear the light of the nineteenth century. With the other rubbish of bygone ages, it is destined to pass away. In reply to this, we admit that the doctrine of the Trinity is an old doctrine, as old as the Bible; yea, infinitely older, as old as God himself. It has its foundations in the very nature of God, and is, like the Divine Being, eternal. And as to its being destined to pass away, we can only say, that when this takes place, the Gospel must pass away with it. The Trinity, and the grand scheme of redeeming mercy, must fall together. If God's work of salvation in respect to this apostate world is to go on; if the nations are yet to be reached and renovated by the Gospel; if

Christ is to see the whole travail of his soul and be satisfied; if the elect of God are to be gathered in; then we may be sure that the doctrine of the holy Trinity will stand. It will never pass away. God will always exist, as he always has existed, a *triune God*, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the distinct offices and works of these adorable personages will continue to be fulfilled.

In every view we can take of it, the doctrine of the Trinity is one of the highest importance. It is important *theologically*. It has respect to *God*, our Creator, Preserver, and Moral Governor,—the first cause and last end of all things,—the only proper object of supreme love and religious worship. It sets forth the mysterious and wonderful *mode* of the divine existence,—in some sense *one*, and in some other sense *three*,—three divine and equal persons, in the one all-perfect, incomprehensible, and eternal God.

This doctrine has respect, also, to the *glory* and *blessedness* of the Supreme Being. If it can be conceived at all, that a Being having such perfections as we ascribe to God, should have existed from all eternity, and been perfectly happy in utter, blank *solitude*, it certainly gives us higher views of the glory and blessedness of the Supreme Being, to conceive of him as possessing within himself exhaustless resources of *social blessedness;* the means of an inter-communion and fellowship the most endearing and delightful. "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. ii. 8). "Then said I, Lo I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Ps. xl. 8).

The doctrine of the Trinity is one of obvious and infinite importance, as it stands connected with the great subject of *redemption*. It was between the three persons in the Godhead that the eternal covenant of redemption was formed; and in executing this gracious covenant, the divine three are each and all of them engaged. The Father has *his* appropriate office and work, and the Son *his*, and the Spirit *his*. The part of neither can be dispensed with in the work of our redemption; nor can the part of either be performed by any other than its appropriate

personage. The Father cannot perform the office-work of the Son, nor the Son that of the Father, nor either of them that of the Holy Spirit. Give up the doctrine of the Trinity, therefore, and the whole scheme of man's redemption is subverted and overthrown.

And as without the Trinity there could be no redemption, so it is redemption alone which develops, discloses, certifies to us, *in act*, the doctrine of the Trinity. For aught that appears, the works of creation and providence may have been performed by one God in one person. But not so the work of man's redemption. This is a greater, deeper work, which opens to us wonders and glories in the very nature, as well as character, of the Supreme Being, which otherwise must have been concealed forever. It involves, of necessity, the concurrence and co-operation of three divine persons, and reveals not only to our understandings, but our *hearts*, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The doctrine of the Trinity is also one of great *practical* importance. And this is a consideration which, in discussing the subject, has been too often overlooked. This doctrine lays the only foundation on which we can acceptably *worship* God, or hold spiritual communion with him. Our only mode of access to the Father is *by* the Spirit, and *through* the Son. "Through whom we have access, by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18).

From each of the divine persons in the Trinity the people of God derive specific advantages, and to each they are under specific obligations of obedience and love. To each they are endeared by a thousand ties, and from neither of these adorable personages does the intelligent Christian feel that he can ever part. He cannot part with his heavenly *Father*. How can he? To be never again able to say: "Our Father who art in heaven;" what Christian can consent to this? No more can he consent to part with his divine *Redeemer*, his *Saviour*. Think of it, my brother, and tell me whether, for any consideration, or under any circumstances, you can be separated from him? How can you live, or breathe, or exist as a Christian, but in entire and constant dependence on him, who is all your salvation and all

your desire? And then, as to the holy *Sanctifier* and *Comforter;* who can consent to part with him? To have no more of his sweet breathings, and inward communings, and gentle strivings,—to be cut off from his quickening and comforting influences,—to be separated, in short, from the Holy Spirit;—what thought can be more insupportable to the pious heart?

No wonder, in this view, that Christians, in all ages, have been so tenacious of this doctrine of the Trinity. No wonder that they have received it, rested on it, clung to it, and contended for it, as the charter of their immortal hopes.

LECTURE XV.

THE DECREES OR PURPOSES OF GOD.

THE decrees of God are the chosen, the adopted *plan* of all his works. They "are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his own will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

It is unreasonable to suppose that God would enter upon his vast work of creation, providence, and redemption, without a plan. No wise person would undertake to build a house, or a ship, or to accomplish a voyage, or a journey, without a plan. And shall we suppose the all-wise Creator to have entered upon the stupendous work in which he is engaged,—the work of filling the universe with suns and systems, with beings and worlds, and of rolling along the mighty wheel of his providence, without any settled purpose or plan?

And as that theory which rejects or overlooks the eternal purpose of God is unreasonable, so also it is undesirable. Who would not prefer that events in providence should take place according to an infinitely wise and perfect plan, rather than that they should be left at random, or be controlled either by chance or fate?

It is a comfort to us to know, therefore, that this eternal purpose or plan of God is referred to in many passages of the inspired volume. "I am the Lord, and there is none else; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done saying, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure;* calling a ravenous bird from the East, the man that executeth *my counsel* from a far country. I have spoken it; I also will bring it to pass. I have *purposed it;* I also will do it" (Is. xlvi. 9-11). "*The counsel of the Lord*

standeth forever; the thoughts of his heart to all generations" (Ps. xxxiii. 11). "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, *the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand*" (Prov. xix. 21). "He doeth according to *his will* in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. iv. 35). "Against thy holy child Jesus, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever *thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done*" (Acts iv. 27, 28). "Who worketh all things *after the counsel of his own will*" (Eph. i. 11).

It is not my purpose to go into a critical examination of these and the like passages here. They all refer to a *will*, a *pleasure*, a *counsel*, a *purpose*, of the Supreme Being, which is never frustrated, not even by the greatest wickedness of man; which, so far from being frustrated by human wickedness, is the rather fulfilled by it; which is sure to stand in spite of all opposition, and to go into complete and endless accomplishment.

That we may understand aright the purposes of God, they must be carefully distinguished from several other things with which they have sometimes been confounded. They must be distinguished,—

1. From the law of God. The law of God is the rule which he has given to his intelligent creatures, for the regulation of their conduct. But the purposes of God are *not* a rule of conduct to his creatures. They are rather a plan of operation to himself,—*the plan* according to which he is disposing of events throughout the universe. Then, the law of God is clearly and fully *revealed*. But the purposes of God,—except in some leading particulars, which he has disclosed by his prophets,—are *not* revealed. They are a profound secret in his own breast. Again, the law of God is often *broken*. It is broken in every act of sin. But the purposes of God are never contravened or frustrated. In crucifying the Saviour, the Jews broke the law of God, but they fulfilled his providential purpose. They did "what his hand and counsel had before determined should be done" (Acts iv. 27, 28).

2. The purposes of God are to be distinguished from his

desires or *wishes*. The desires of God may be, and often are, his feelings in regard to objects or events, viewed *separately* and *singly*. The purposes of God are his preferences in regard to objects or events, viewed in relation to *the great whole*. In itself considered, God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but, all things considered, he has purposed that the incorrigibly wicked shall die. In itself considered, God is not pleased with the existence of sin or suffering anywhere; yet sin and suffering do exist, and it was doubtless his purpose, in view of the great whole, that it should be so.

3. The purposes of God are to be distinguished from that benevolent *design* which is apparent everywhere in his works. We often say, and say truly, that God has designed and adapted things with a view to the happiness of his creatures; and that had not his benevolent designs been interrupted and frustrated by sin, his creatures might have been universally happy. But the word *design* here is not used in the sense of *providential purpose*, which we have seen is never frustrated by sin, but rather to express that admirable *adaptation* of things, which is manifest in the works of God, and which sin, to some extent, has frustrated. I remark once more,—

4. The purposes of God are to be distinguished from his *foreknowledge*. They differ from foreknowledge, not in this, that they make events any more *fixed* or *certain*, but rather in this, that they are *prior*, in the order of nature, to foreknowledge, and are that on which it is *grounded*,—on which it *rests*.

Mere knowledge *makes* nothing certain, but only knows that particular things *are* certain. This is true of *all* knowledge; whether *fore*knowledge, or *present* knowledge, or *after*knowledge. But if foreknowledge does not *make* future contingencies and events certain, but merely perceives that they *are* certain, the question arises, *Upon what is it based?* What is there going before it, in the order of nature, to establish, and settle, and *make* certain those things which foreknowledge merely perceives *are* certain? From the nature of the case, there must be something here; and what is it, what can it be, but the eternal purpose of God?

We may look at the question in another light. No intelligent

Theist doubts that all future contingencies and events depend upon *the will of God*. It depends entirely on his will, whether either of us shall live another day, or how long we shall live; and so of all other events in the future. But how shall God know that future things, which depend entirely on his will, *shall be*, unless he has put forth some act of will respecting them; or, in other words, unless he has *purposed* their existence? If all future contingencies depend on the will of God, then, obviously, until he has willed or purposed that they shall be, they are not at all *settled* or *certain*, and nothing can be known or foreknown respecting them.

It may be added further, unless, in the order of nature, the purposes of God precede foreknowledge, then they are entirely *useless* and *superfluous*. What propriety or profit in God's determining that a thing *shall* be, when he already knows, for a certainty, that it *will* be?

It may be objected to the position here taken, that if the purposes of God precede foreknowledge, then they must be utterly *blind purposes*. They must be formed without knowledge, and in the dark.—This objection owes all its plausibility to a confounding of the distinction between *foreknowledge* and *omniscience*. The purposes of God do not precede omniscience, though, in the order of nature they do precede foreknowledge. I say, as I have said before, in the order of *nature;* for, in eternal things, there can be no order of time.

In the order of nature, then, we are, first of all, to conceive of the Divine Being himself, in the possession of his essential and eternal attributes,—among which is *omniscience*. In the possession of omniscience, he looks out upon the whole range and compass of possible things. But everything, at this stage, is barely *possible*. "I can adopt this plan, that, or the other,—anything, everything, within the range of possibility." As yet nothing is fixed, nothing determined on; and of course nothing future is certain, or can be foreknown. But among all the possible plans of operation presented to the Omniscient Mind, instantly and intuitively, the *best* plan is discovered, and instantly it is preferred or adopted. It is adopted in all its branches and particulars,—in all its endless ramifications. Everything em-

braced in this plan (and everything *is* embraced in it) is now settled and certain, and becomes at once the object of foreknowledge. It could not be foreknown before, because it was not certain before.

According to this view (which to my own mind is the only consistent one), the omniscience of God precedes his purposes, and holds up the light—all the light possible—in view of which his purposes are formed; while the purposes of God, in the order of nature, precede his foreknowledge, and are that on which foreknowledge rests.

There is another objection to the position we have taken, drawn from certain passages of Scripture. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God" (1 Pet. i. 2). "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate" (Rom. viii. 29). But it is obvious that these Scriptures settle nothing as to the *order* of things in the divine mind, or the divine operation, but merely assert that election, predestination, and foreknowledge are *co-incident* in respect to their objects. The elect are foreknown, and the foreknown are elect. Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate; and whom he did predestinate, them also he foreknew. The logical order of things does not seem to be at all indicated here, but merely that the foreknown, the predestinate, and the elect, are the same persons.

I have been the more careful to set forth, and to vindicate, the proper distinction between the purposes of God and his foreknowledge, because much of the difference between Arminians and Calvinists rests (as in the progress of the discussion we shall see) precisely here.

Having explained the decrees or purposes of God, and shown how they are distinguished from several things with which they have sometimes been confounded, I proceed to say, that the divine purposes are strictly *universal*. They extend to the moral world as well as the natural,—to all beings and things, to all creatures and events, throughout the universe. This is certain.

1. From the declarations of Scripture. God is said in the Scriptures to "work *all things* after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. i. 2). Hence the counsel of his will must extend to all

things. He is also said to "do according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth," or, in words, throughout the universe (Dan. iv. 35).

2. The universality of God's purposes may be proved from his *omniscience* and his *infinite benevolence*. In the possession of omniscience, as I have just remarked, God must have perceived intuitively, and from all eternity, what was the *best plan* of providence, and, perceiving this, he could not (if he is infinitely benevolent) have been indifferent in regard to it. He must instantly have preferred or purposed it. He must have purposed it in its fullest extent, in all its endless ramifications. This plan of God, extending through the immensity of space and duration, — reaching to all events, little and great, near and remote, in the natural and in the moral world, — constitutes the eternal purpose of God, and must be strictly universal.

3. The universality of God's purposes may also be proved from the universality of his *foreknowledge*. Few men have the hardihood to deny that the foreknowledge of God, in respect to future contingencies and events, is universal. But we have seen that, in the order of nature, the foreknowledge of God follows his purposes, and rests upon them. Hence, certainly, the former can be no more extensive than the latter. What God foreknows he must have purposed. If foreknowledge is universal, the divine purposes must be.

4. The universality of God's purposes may be further argued from his *predictions*. The predictions of God are but a disclosure of his purposes; and although these predictions are not universal, still, if God has purposed as many things as he has actually predicted, the conclusion is reasonable that he has purposed all things. Certainly, no objection can be made to God's purposing everything, which will not lie against his purposing very many things, which he has clearly foretold.

5. The universal purposes of God may be inferred from his *universal providence*. Whatever God does in time he must have proposed to do in eternity. But his providential agency is, in some sense, universal. This point I assume here. The proof of it will be furnished in a subsequent Lecture. A necessary inference from the assumption is, that the purposes of God

are universal. It is literally true, not only that he "*worketh* all things" in his providence, but that he does it "after the counsel of his own will."

The purposes of God are also *eternal*. They are expressly said to be eternal in the Scriptures. "According to the *eternal* purpose of God, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 11).

We have before shown that the purposes of God result directly from his *perfections*, — more especially from his omniscience and his infinite benevolence. Hence, they must be eternal, like his perfections.

Their *immutability* is also proof of their eternity. Men often change their purposes, but God never changes his. Why should he change them? They are formed in view of all possible contingencies and circumstances. Nothing new or unanticipated can ever come up to make it desirable or proper for him to alter any of his plans. We may be sure, therefore, that they are not changed. They are immutable. Hence, whatever purposes the infinite God has now, or ever will have, he must have had from all eternity.

Objections.

1. It is always objected to the doctrine here discussed, that it is inconsistent with *human freedom*. If the actions of men are all fixed and certain, in the eternal purpose of God, then how can man be free? — We shall have occasion to consider this objection more at large in another place. Suffice it, at present, to reply, first, that the purposes of God make the actions of men no more fixed and certain, and are on this account no more inconsistent with human freedom, than his foreknowledge. Yet those, for the most part, admit the universal foreknowledge of God who object to his purposes that they destroy free agency.

We reply, secondly, that the *previous certainty of actions* (and this is all that the purposes and foreknowledge of God establish respecting them) is in no case inconsistent with their freedom. Men act just as freely when it is known beforehand to God, and often to their fellow-creatures, how they will act, as though nothing had been known or certain respecting them.

We reply, thirdly, it is an important part of the divine purpose respecting intelligent beings, that *they shall be free*. God as much purposed my moral freedom as he did my existence. Hence, I must be a free, responsible agent, or the purpose of God respecting me will not stand. In this view, the eternal purposes of God, instead of conflicting with the free agency of creatures, go the rather to establish it.

I throw out these remarks with a view to aid inquiring minds in coming to a solution of the question before us. My final reply to the objection is, that whether *we* can reconcile the purposes of God with the free agency of man, or not, we certainly know that both doctrines are true. In thousands of instances God has revealed his purposes beforehand respecting events which involved the agency of his creatures; such, for example, as the captivity and restoration of the Jews, and the crucifixion of Christ; and yet the human agents concerned in these events have acted with entire freedom, and are justly responsible for their conduct.

2. It is further objected that the purposes of God, more especially those which relate to the existence of sin and misery, are inconsistent with *his goodness*. But are they any more inconsistent with the goodness of God than his providence? Sin and misery do actually exist, and exist under the providential government of God. And if it is not inconsistent with his goodness to cause, or to permit, their existence in time, how was it contrary to his goodness to *purpose* their existence in eternity?

If God permits the existence of evil, or if he purposed to permit it because he loves it and delights in it, this would be inconsistent with his goodness. But if he permits and purposed its existence because he saw that he could overrule it for a *greater good in the end*, then his motives, in so doing, were good, and both his purposes and his providence stand clear. The benevolence of both may be easily vindicated.

3. It has been objected that the Calvinistic doctrine of divine purposes is precisely similar to the heathen doctrine of *fate*. But this is far from being true. The fate of the heathen was a blind fate, an arbitrary fate, binding equally gods and men: whereas the purposes of which we speak are the preferences,

the counsels of an infinitely wise and good Being, formed in view of the best reasons, and all tending to the noblest ends. Besides; the believers in fate have always been *fatalists*, in the worst sense of the term; denying human freedom and responsibility, and discarding the distinction between virtue and vice. But Calvinists, with scarcely an exception, have been the strenuous advocates of human freedom, and have insisted that the distinction between virtue and vice, good and evil, is immutable and eternal.

Many persons, alarmed at the supposed difficulties attending an admission of the great doctrine of divine purposes, have been inclined to reject it, and to adopt Arminian views in regard to this whole subject. But, by such a procedure, have they altogether escaped difficulties? Are not the difficulties attending the commonly received Arminian theories at least as formidable as those which beset Calvinism?

Most Arminians believe in the universal and eternal foreknowledge of God, but deny that his foreknowledge is founded on his purposes. On the contrary, they make his purpose the consequents of his foreknowledge. It was not till he had foreseen how men would act, and in what way events generally would take place, that he was prepared to form any purpose respecting them.

But enough has been said already to show that this theory is encumbered with insuperable difficulties. It devolves on those who embrace it to show on what the foreknowledge of God is based; or what that is which *makes* those future events certain which foreknowledge merely perceives *are* certain. They must further show how the Divine Being, or any other being, can know that particular events in the future, which depend entirely on his sovereign pleasure, *will be*, until he has purposed or determined that they *shall be*. Nor is this all. Let those who hold that the foreknowledge of God precedes his purposes, show why God, on this ground, should have any purposes. Of what use to determine that a thing *shall be* when he already knows that it certainly *will be?*

It will be perceived, also, that the objections commonly urged against the universal purposes of God lie with equal weight

against this theory of universal foreknowledge. As remarked above, the former is no more inconsistent with human freedom than the latter. If universal foreknowledge can be reconciled with the unembarrassed free agency of man, universal decrees can be reconciled just as well, and after the same manner.

Some have thought it to be inconsistent with the goodness of God that he should have purposed the existence of a world like this, in which there is so much sin and misery. But is it at all less inconsistent with the goodness of God to suppose him to have created this world, and to have entered on his work of providence over it, when he certainly *knew* what an amount of evil, both natural and moral, would thereby be incurred? He certainly *knew*, if he created the world, that sin would almost immediately enter it, and death by sin, and all the woes which have since followed in the train of sin, and are to result from it forever. Why, then, did he not stay his hand? Why did he create such a world as this?

To avoid difficulties like these, some have even denied the universal foreknowledge of God; on the ground, either that there were some things which, in eternity, *he preferred not to foreknow*, or that they were of such a nature that he *could not foreknow them*. To the first of these theories, viz., that there were some things which, in eternity, God chose not to foreknow, I object, that he must have known what these things were, or he could not have known that he had better not foreknow them; — which shows, at a glance, the utter absurdity of the supposition. To the theory that there are some things — for example, the free actions of men — of such a nature, that, in eternity, God could not foreknow them, I object, that, on this ground, God must be continually growing in knowledge. He knows ten thousand things to-day which he did not, and could not, know yesterday. What, then, is to become of God's eternal omniscience and his immutability?

To both these theories of partial foreknowledge, I urge the following objections:—

1. They represent, not only God's purpose, but his providential view of things, as comparatively a small matter. He has some plan respecting events in the natural world. At least, he

foresees what they will be. But as to the entire range of events in the vast moral world — the free, responsible actions of creatures — they are all blank to him. He knows nothing about them. He has no plan or purpose or foresight in respect to them.

2. These theories are inconsistent with the *predictions* of Scripture. The inspired writers assure us that God does foreknow the free actions of creatures, because, in thousands of instances, he has predicted them, and his predictions have come to pass.

3. These theories are inconsistent with the *perfections* of God, and make him, in fact, no God at all. In illustration of this, we may apply the theories (where their abettors would prefer they should be applied) to the existence of sin and misery in the universe. When God created the angels, he had no thought that any of them would ever sin; but a multitude of them disappointed him; they sinned and fell. And so when our first parents were created, and placed in the garden of Eden, God had no thought or expectation of their sinning; but by some means, the devil succeeded in getting into the garden, where he seduced them, and they fell. And when God saw that they had fallen, he entered upon a plan of redemption, but without knowing at all what would be the issue of the plan; — whether any would avail themselves of his offers of mercy, or whether all that he should do for them would be in vain.

Such, then, is the doctrine of partial foreknowledge, in its bearing on the perfection and glory of the Supreme Being, — representing him as unworthy to be called by the name of God, or to be addressed as the Almighty Sovereign of the universe.

In conclusion, I remark: let no one reject the doctrine of God's universal and eternal purposes, in hope of being rid of difficulties. If there are difficulties attending the reception of this doctrine, the difficulties of rejecting it are incomparably greater. It is a doctrine plainly revealed in the Bible. It is one of the utmost importance, in its practical results. It gives us the most exalted views of God, setting him high upon the throne, placing the entire universe in his hands, and subjecting it to his sovereign control. It is fitted, also, to sustain and

comfort the people of God, more especially in seasons of darkness and adversity; to give them a sense of his distinguishing goodness, and of their high obligations to be the Lord's. At the same time it is fitted, perhaps beyond any other doctrine, to try the hearts and humble the pride of rebellious men, and show them what manner of spirit they are of.

It should be added, that this doctrine of God's purposes, is not exclusively one of revelation. Resulting, as it does, from the very perfections of the Supreme Being, it may be clearly inferred from these perfections, even where the Bible is not enjoyed. And this accounts for it, that those who reject the doctrine are constrained, if consistent, to adopt unworthy views of God, — those which rob him of his perfections, and represent him as but an inferior divinity. Assuredly, all those who love God, — the God of nature and of the Bible, — who love to see him arrayed in all his adorable perfections, and exalted to the throne of absolute and universal dominion, — will love the doctrine of his universal and eternal purposes.

LECTURE XVI.

ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

In my last Lecture, we considered the subject of God's universal and eternal *purposes or decrees*. Intimately connected with this great subject, so as to constitute an important branch of it, is the doctrine of *election*. All those who will be finally saved it must have been the choice or purpose of God, in eternity, to save; and this eternal choice or purpose, in regard to their salvation, was their *election*.

In order rightly to understand the doctrine of election, it is necessary to regard it, not as a separate and independent doctrine; but as a connected branch of a much greater doctrine; viz., that of *God's universal and eternal purposes*. Many persons seem to regard the salvation of the elect as almost the only thing that was settled in the eternal purpose of God, and the doctrine of election as standing out alone, and by itself. But the salvation of the elect is no more secured, in the eternal purpose of God, than is every other future event or contingency. Nor is the final salvation of the elect any more fixed, in the divine purpose, than are all the *means* of their salvation; all the circumstances and influences tending to promote it, and all the consequences resulting from it.

The doctrine of election is frequently and most expressly asserted in the Scriptures. Christ speaks often of those whom his Father had *given him*, and says that for them the kingdom of heaven was prepared *before the foundation of the world* (Matt. xxv. 34). Paul tells us that believers were *chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world*"; that God had, "in the beginning, *chosen them to salvation*"; that they were "called with a holy calling, according to *the purpose and grace* which

was given them in Christ Jesus, *before the world began*" (Eph. i. 4; 2 Thes. ii. 13; 2 Tim. i. 9). "*Elect*, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. i. 2).

Arminians regard the decree of election, like all the other decrees of God, as depending on his foreknowledge. Foreseeing that certain individuals *will* repent and believe in Christ, he chooses such to everlasting life. But to this view of the case there are insuperable objections.

1. It was proved in my last Lecture that the foreknowledge of God is, in all cases, the result of his purposes, and not his purposes the result of his foreknowledge.

2. The theory before us supposes the first motions of the sinner towards repentance and salvation to be from himself, and not from the divine Spirit and grace. Foreseeing that certain individuals *will make* these first efforts, God determines to meet them by his grace, and crown their endeavors with success. But the representations of Scripture on the subject are just the opposite of this. The sinner is there described as in a state of entire spiritual death; and sure to remain in such a state until arrested by the Holy Spirit. The first motions towards repentance are not from the sinner, but from God. Of course, then, there is nothing good in the sinner to be seen, or foreseen, as the ground of his election; but his election, and the consequent grace and assistance of the Spirit, are the ground of his recovery and salvation.

3. The view here presented is in literal accordance with the teachings of the Apostle Paul on the subject. He assures us that believers were chosen in eternity, not because God foresaw that they would be holy, but that "*they should be holy*, and without blame, before him in love" (Eph. i. 4). They were predestinated "*to be conformed to the image of his Son*" (Rom. viii. 29). They were "elect, through sanctification of the Spirit, *unto obedience*" (1 Pet. i. 2). Hence their obedience was not the cause, but the *consequence* of their election.

It follows, from what has been said, that the election of believers in eternity was *not conditional*. It was not conditioned, as

some suppose, upon their repentance, or their foreseen repentance, but was itself the source and origin of that grace which resulted in their repentance.

Still, in the election of his people, God had (as he ought to have) a due regard to *character*. But in what way? Not to foreseen good character as the ground or reason of it, but to holy character as the *result* of it; or, more properly, as *part* of it, as *included* in it. Believers were chosen in Christ "that *they should be holy*"; predestinated "*to be conformed to the image of his Son*"; elect, "*unto obedience.*" The election of believers secures their ultimate good character and fitness for heaven, and never saves any who do not become morally fit for heaven.

We are not to suppose, however, because the foreseen good character of believers is not the ground or reason of their election, that the purposes of God, in respect to this important matter, are *capricious*, *arbitrary*, and *without reason.* He must be supposed to have had the *best* reasons for choosing some, rather than others, to everlasting life; though in no case, except where he has made a particular revelation, can we so much as conjecture what these reasons were. To the Apostle Paul, the reason of his election and consequent conversion was revealed. "For this cause, *I* obtained mercy, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might *show forth all long-suffering*, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. i. 16). But, except in the case of this great apostle, I am not aware that a particular revelation on this subject has ever been made. The reasons why some are chosen, rather than others, though infinitely wise and good, are at present among the secret things which belong only to God.

"Not Gabriel asks the reason why,
Nor God the reason gives;
Nor dares the fav'rite angel pry
Between the folded leaves."

In reference to one particular we know, indeed, what these reasons *are not.* They are not foreseen repentance and holiness. But as to what, in ordinary cases, they are, we have no means of knowing, and may not undertake to decide.

Objections.

1. It is objected to the doctrine of election, as here stated, that it represents God as a partial Being. He is, in the worst sense of the terms, "a respecter of persons." But we have a sufficient answer to this objection in the remarks just made. Partiality consists, not in treating creatures differently, in view of good and sufficient reasons, but in treating them differently *without* such reasons. A father with a large family of sons, may be strictly impartial, and yet not treat either two of them precisely alike: because he may have very good reasons for not treating them alike. So if God has good reasons for treating his creatures differently in this world, or in the other world; if he has good reasons for electing some to everlasting life, and leaving others to perish in their sins,—as we are bound to believe that he has,—then he does not, on this account, subject himself to the charge of partiality. He is not, in the bad sense of the phrase, a "respecter of persons."

2. It is objected to the doctrine of election, that it makes God *unjust*. But how unjust? Do those who are left to suffer endure anything more than they deserve; or more than they must have endured, had the whole fallen race of man been left to go to destruction together? It was no injustice to the laborers in the vineyard, who had borne the burden and heat of the day, that those who came in at the eleventh hour received the same wages as themselves. They received all that they had contracted for,—all that they had earned; and why should they complain? And just so in the case before us. That saving mercy is shown to the elect, is no injury to the non-elect. They suffer no more than their proper deserts, and of course have no reason to complain of injustice.

3. It is further objected to the doctrine of election, that it is inconsistent with *the use of means*. "If I am elected I shall be saved, and if not elected I cannot be, whether I use means or not." To this I answer, first, that the objection applies equally to any other subject, as to that of salvation. The husbandman may as well say, "If I am to have a crop, I shall have one, whether I use the means or not," as to say, "If I am to be saved,

I shall be, whether I use the means or not." Yet the common sense of every one is sufficient to refute the cavil in the former case; and why not in the latter?

But secondly, the doctrine of election, properly explained, so far from furnishing any ground for this objection, entirely removes it. Means are decreed as well as ends; and as being absolutely *necessary* in order to the accomplishment of their ends. Hence, in every case the appointed means must be used, else the end in view will not be realized. Those who, from the beginning, were chosen to salvation, must become holy, and meet in character for heaven; for they were chosen that *they should be holy*, and without blame before God in love. Hence, they must use the requisite means of becoming holy. They can become holy and be saved in no other way.

4. It is further objected to the doctrine before us, that the election spoken of in the Bible refers to *nations* and not to individuals, and is an election to peculiar *privileges*, and not to salvation. In this sense the Jews are sometimes spoken of as a *chosen people*. If the statement here made were to be admitted, I see not but the same objection would lie against it as against the proper doctrine of election. For if God may elect a people to peculiar privileges in this world, why may he not elect an individual to peculiar privileges and blessings, even all the blessings of salvation, in the world to come? But the statement in the objection is not to be admitted. The election spoken of in many passages of the New Testament, is an election, not of communities or nations, *but of individuals;* and an election, not to privileges in this life, but to eternal salvation. Were nations, as such, "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world"? Were they "chosen to *salvation* through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth"?

Intimately connected with the doctrine of divine purposes, and of election, is what has been called the doctrine of *reprobation*. If we believe that, in eternity, God purposed the salvation of those who will finally be saved, we must believe that he also purposed the destruction of all those who will be finally lost; and this doctrine, like that of election, is plainly taught in the Scriptures. The Apostle Peter, speaking of those who stumble

at the word and are disobedient, adds "whereunto also they were *appointed*" (1 Pet. ii. 8). Jude speaks of ungodly men "who were before, of old, *ordained to condemnation*" (v. 4). The writer of the Apocalypse also speaks of some whose "names were *not* written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xvii. 8). Of course, they were, from the foundation of the world, *left out of it;* or, which is the same, *reprobated.*

Reprobation, like election, we hold to be *unconditional.* In other words, the reprobation of an individual is not conditioned on his *foreseen incorrigibly sinful character.* Still, the decree of reprobation supposes and includes the incorrigibly bad character of all those who are the subjects of it, just as the opposite decree includes the repentance and spiritual recovery of all the elect. Election never saved a persistently wicked man, and it never will. Reprobation never destroyed a good man, and it never will. It was certain to the mind of God from all eternity — because he had so purposed it — that his elect should come to repentance, persevere in holiness, and at length be made meet for heaven; and that the non-elect would go on in their sins freely, persistently, incorrigibly, until their ruin was complete.

It should also be said that the decree of reprobation, like that of election, is not an *arbitrary* one, formed without reason. It proceeds, in all cases, on the *best* of reasons, though we may not be able to determine (except where God has revealed it) what these reasons are. Pharaoh was a reprobate, and God has condescended to inform us why he was so. "For this cause have I raised thee up, for to show my power in thee, and that my name may be declared through all the earth" (Ex. ix. 16). But, except in the case of Pharaoh, I know not that God has ever made any such revelation.

Some persons regard reprobation as in all respects the counterpart of election; but clearly this is not the case. In election God determines to bestow *special grace*, and pluck the individual subjects of it as brands from the burning. But in reprobation God does not determine to exert any *special* influence, with a view to fit men for destruction. No such influence is needed in the case. He rather determines, for wise reasons unknown

to us, to *withhold* special, converting grace, and leave the reprobate to their own hearts' wanderings. They are not *constrained* to sin and to suffer, but are left to the unrestrained exercise of their own corruptions, — in which way their ruin is speedily and certainly accomplished.

I have said that the reprobate are *left of God*, — *given over* to their own hearts' lusts. By this we do not understand that they are left as to God's *general providential agency;* for left in this sense, they would not be moral agents, — would not exist. But they are left as to the bestowment of *special converting grace.* This grace God is under no obligations, in point of justice, to bestow upon any sinner. Hence, he may have mercy on whom he will have mercy; and those whom he passes by, and whom, in eternity, he purposed to pass by, have no reason to complain.

Objections.

Some of the objections to the decree of reprobation, such as that it is inconsistent with man's free agency, and, with the use of means, are the same that are commonly urged against the general doctrine of God's purposes and his decree of election, and are to be answered in the same way. There are other objections peculiar to reprobation, on which we must bestow a moment's attention.

It is objected, in the first place, that God would not have made *provision* in the gospel for the salvation of all men, if it had been his purpose, from eternity, that some should not be saved. But why not? The *provisions* of God's grace are one thing; man's *acceptance* or *rejection* of these provisions is quite another thing. Arminians believe that a portion of the human race *will not accept* the provisions of the gospel, and will perish in their sins; and that all this was distinctly known to the Infinite Mind from eternity. Why, then, did he make provisions which he knew would not be accepted? Why did he offer salvation to those who he knew would only trifle with it, and thereby incur the greater guilt? When our Arminian friends have removed these difficulties, they will have little

trouble with those which lie at the basis of the objection above proposed.

Again, it is objected to the doctrine of reprobation, that God "will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4). But *will* all men be actually saved and come to the knowledge of the truth? This Arminians, who urge the objection, do not believe. They agree with the Calvinists, that some men will finally be lost. What, then, will they make of the passage quoted in the objection, but that God wills, in some sense, the salvation of all men, while it has entered into his great plan of providence that all are not to be saved? In what way will they interpret this and other like passages, but by setting up the important distinction insisted on in my last Lecture, between the *desires* of God, which are crossed by every act of sin, and the *purposes* of God, which are never frustrated?

It is further objected that reprobation is inconsistent with the *sincerity* of God, in urging the universal offers and invitations of the gospel; making these offers, so far as the non-elect are concerned, no better than mockery. It is a full vindication of God's sincerity in the offers and invitations of the gospel, that they are in strict accordance with his benevolent desires. He hath "no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). He willeth not, in itself considered, "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9). These benevolent desires for the salvation of all men are appropriately expressed in the universal offers and invitations of the gospel, and in the manner in which these are urged. What is sincerity, in any case, but the conformity of our pretensions to the desires and feelings of our hearts? If, then, God says what he *feels*, in urging the invitations of his gospel; if his words are a true expression of his heart; then is his sincerity sufficiently vindicated.

It is sometimes said that reprobation makes the salvation of a part of the human race *impossible*. But in what sense impossible? Not *naturally* so. Not in any such sense impossible as to interfere with freedom, or excuse from blame. The non-elect

have the same natural capacities and powers as the elect. The same Saviour has died for them; the same offers are made to them; the same motives and obligations are urged upon them. The non-elect *may repent and be saved, if they will.* To be sure, it is certain to the mind of God that *they never will repent;* and this is all the impossibility in the case. When they might repent, and ought to repent; when God desires their repentance, and most sincerely urges the duty upon them, it is certain to his all-seeing eye that they never will repent. They *will* go on in their sins freely, voluntarily, uncorrected and unrestrained, until iniquity proves their ruin.

LECTURE XVII.

THE PURPOSES OF GOD, AS SEEN IN HIS WORKS.

As the works of God fulfil his purposes, so they are the grand *revealer* of his purposes. Except in a few leading particulars, which have been made matter of *special* revelation, they are the *only* revealer of his purposes. Whatever God does in time, we know that it was his purpose to do in eternity. "Who worketh all things *after the counsel of his own will*." But aside from the disclosures which are made in the works of God, we have no means at all of knowing, in the general, what his purposes are. They are shrouded, so far as we can discover, in impenetrable darkness. They are the secrets of his holy will, for the evolving of which we should be prepared, but into which we are not permitted to look.

And as the works of God reveal his purposes, they are, perhaps, the best medium through which to investigate his purposes. They hold up a light, in view of which his purposes can best be understood. In the following Lecture, I propose to avail myself chiefly of this light. I propose to inquire into the purposes of God, as these are unfolded in his works. What, then, does God work? And how does he work? And what light do his works of creation, providence, and redemption shed on the subject of his purposes?

1. God works in his providence according to fixed and established *laws*. These are sometimes called the laws of nature. They run alike through the worlds of matter and of mind, and are never interrupted, except in the case of miracles. And these laws are not only uniform, but they are *wise* and *good*. The more they are investigated, the more they are seen to be wise and good; and the greater reason have God's intelligent creatures to be satisfied with them, and thankful for them.

Such, then, is the manner in which God actually governs the world,—by *wise*, *reasonable*, and *established laws*. Hence we know that, from all eternity, he *purposed* to govern the world in this way. His purposes, in this respect, are unfolded in his works; and they are seen to be, not those arbitrary things which some suppose, but altogether reasonable, wise, and good.

2. In the providential government of God, we uniformly see *means and ends going together*. The great ends of his government God accomplishes usually, perhaps invariably, by appropriate means. So it is in the natural world; and equally so in the moral world. If a crop is to be raised, or a journey to be performed, or an estate to be gained, there must be means. Or if an education is to be acquired, or a soul to be converted, or a believer to be sanctified and made meet for heaven, there must be means. Means are as indispensable in the one case as in the other.

Such then, in another view, is the manner in which God carries on his work of providence,—in which he governs the worlds both of matter and of mind. And hence, on this point, we know what were God's eternal purposes. He *purposed* to govern the world by means. In his purposes, as well as in his providence, means and ends are connected together.

It is sometimes said that the divine purposes supersede the use of means, and render them superfluous? If God has purposed that a thing *shall be* then it *will be*, whether means are used or not. But we learn from this subject, that God's purposes never interfere with the use of means. On the contrary, they bind means and ends together. They bind them so inseparably, indispensably together, that where the appropriate means are not used the end is never to be expected.

To illustrate this, we have an instance in point in the sacred history. During Paul's voyage to Rome, it was revealed to him that not one soul on board the ship with him should be lost; they all should get safe to land. Such was the revealed purpose of God respecting them. But means were necessary to effect this purpose. The ship's company were to be saved through the instrumentality of the sailors. Hence, when Paul saw the sailors preparing to escape, he said: "Except these

abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (Acts xxvii. 31). Here, a revealed purpose of God would have been frustrated, if the means of its accomplishment had not been employed. And so in every other case. God works by means. He purposed, from all eternity, to work by means. Hence, where appropriate means are not employed, the end is, in no case, to be expected.

3. It is a fact that, under the providential government of God, man is a *free, responsible agent.* He acts from choice. He does as he pleases. He has all the freedom of which he can conceive, and is conscious of being justly responsible for his actions. Such are the facts in regard to the moral freedom of man, under the providential government of God. And now what is the inference as to the eternal purpose of God respecting him? Obviously this, that man *should be* a free, responsible agent. Man is a dependent creature of God. God made him what he is; God sustains and controls him as he is; and hence, as he is a free, responsible agent, it entered into the eternal purpose of God that he should be so.

The purposes of God are sometimes thought to be inconsistent with human freedom. "If God has purposed all our circumstances and actions, then they *must be* just as they are, and how can we be free?" But it seems, from the view here taken, that God's eternal purposes, so far from interfering with human freedom, go to establish it. It was an important part of God's purpose that man *should* be free. God as much decreed my moral freedom as he did my existence; and the former could no more fail than the latter.

4. Another feature of the divine administration is, that *God hears and answers prayer.* He has required his intelligent creatures in this world to pray. He has given them the greatest encouragement to pray. And when they do pray in a proper spirit and manner, he actually hears them, and sends them answers of peace. Such, in this view, are the facts of God's moral administration; and what, I again ask, is the inference as to his eternal purposes? Certainly, we can draw no other than this, that it entered into God's purpose, from all eternity, that he *would* hear and answer prayer.

The purposes of God are sometimes thought to be inconsistent

with prayer. "If everything is fixed and settled in the divine purpose, what can prayer do? And why should prayer, under any circumstances, be offered?" Now the view we have taken shows us, that the purposes of God, so far from interfering with the duty of prayer, rather make prayer necessary. It was a part of God's eternal purpose that Christians should pray, and that he would listen to their prayers, and in mercy answer their requests. The divine purposes go to establish, and not destroy, the ground and the necessity of prayer.

5. In his providence, God invariably connects holy character and right conduct with inward peace and happiness in this world, and with eternal blessedness in the life to come; while he connects sinful character and conduct with unhappiness here, and, if persisted in, with endless miseries hereafter. In other words, the characters and conduct of men in this world are followed by a *righteous retribution*. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Such are the *facts* of God's government in regard to the consequences of our actions; a part of which we *see* taking place around us, and the remainder of which God has revealed to us in his Word. And knowing these facts, we know, of course, in respect to this matter, what were God's eternal purposes. He purposed, from all eternity, that he *would* reward the righteous, and punish the wicked: or that the conduct of his creatures, in this world, should be followed by a righteous and endless retribution.

Some have thought that the doctrine of God's purposes was inconsistent with the very idea of retribution;—that if the actions of men were all fixed and determined in the counsels of heaven, eternal ages before they were born, then, whatever their conduct might be, they deserved neither praise nor blame, reward nor punishment. But we have seen that the purposes of God, so far from interfering with the doctrine of retribution, go the rather to establish it. That the righteous should be rewarded and the wicked punished, and that all should be treated, finally, according to their works,—this constituted an important part of the divine purpose from all eternity.

I have introduced the foregoing particulars for the purpose of illustrating the general truth, that *the works of God reveal*

his purposes,—or whatever he does in time, we may know it was his purpose to do before time began. Let us now advance a step in the argument, and say, that whatever it is *proper* for God to do in his providence, it must have been *as* proper for him to purpose to do in eternity. Is not this proposition self-evidently true? Can any reasonable person doubt it? Can there be any valid objection to God's forming a *purpose* to do that in eternity, which it is proper and right for him *to do* in time?

Let us, then, take this self-evident truth, apply it to some of the actual dealings of God's providence, and see if it does not furnish some new light, and some relief to our minds, in regard to his eternal purposes. And,—

1. Let us apply the truth in question to the existence of *sin and misery* in the world. That sin and misery actually exist, and exist somehow, *in the providence of God*, no one can doubt. Nor will any one call in question the propriety of God's dealings in respect to this matter. Whether we can explain the facts of the case, or not, we shall all say that the divine character stands clear. God did right undoubtedly,—he acted wisely and well, as he always does,—in the permission of evil. But if it was right for God, in time, to permit sin and sorrow to enter his dominions, then it was right for him, in eternity, to form his plan accordingly. If, somehow or other, he has done well in *suffering* the existence of these terrible evils, he did just as well in *purposing* their existence. If there is no valid objection to what God has actually *done* in this matter, there can be none to what he *purposed* to do before the world began.

2. It is a fact that God treats his creatures, in this world, *as a sovereign*. He brings them into existence *when* and *how* he pleases; through the whole course of their lives, he treats them *as* he pleases; and when he is pleased to take them away, he does it without asking or seeking their permission. In the circumstances of men here on the earth there is a great diversity. No two are treated precisely alike. Some are rich and some poor; some are sick and some well; some honored and some despised. The lives of some are protracted to a long period, while others are snatched away almost as soon as they are born. No one can doubt that there are these differences in the circum-

stances of men, and that they take place under the government of God. And no one will presume to say that, in ordering the circumstances of his creatures after this manner, God is not doing right. But if God actually does right, in the sovereign dispensations of his providence, was it not right for him in eternity to form his plans accordingly? If no valid objection can be urged against his acts, can there be any objection to his having purposed those acts? Can it have been wrong for God, in eternity, to have formed a plan which it is right for him, in time, to execute? And yet there are many persons who dare not object to God's sovereign dispensations, who do object to his sovereign purposes. They have no doubt that his providences are all right, and that they ought to submit to them, while they complain of his purposes as unjust and cruel.

3. All evangelical Christians believe that God will finally save one portion of the human race and destroy the remainder. They believe that such are the unequivocal teachings of the Holy Scriptures. In the morning of the last day some are to be raised "to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And in the issue of that great day, the wicked are to "go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Such is the disposition to be finally made of the members of the human family. They will be separated one from another, and be made vessels of mercy, or vessels of wrath, to all eternity. And in making this disposition of them, evangelical Christians all believe that God will do perfectly right. He will not act without reason, but from the best of reasons. He will not save or destroy without respect to character, but according to character. He will treat every man according to his works.

But if it will be right for God, in the manner and on the grounds here set forth, to save one portion of the human race, and destroy the remainder, can it be wrong for him to have *purposed* to do this from all eternity? If the *awards* of the final day will be just and right, can the *purposes* of eternity in respect to these same awards be wrong or unreasonable?

And now what is there, in this view, so very objectionable in the doctrines of *election and reprobation?* The doctrine of elec-

tion is but the sovereign purpose of God to save all those of the human race who will finally be saved; and reprobation is his sovereign purpose to pass by the remainder, and leave them to their own chosen way. And if God will do perfectly right, at the last, in receiving the righteous to heaven, and dooming the wicked to hell, can he have been otherwise than right, in forming his eternal purposes accordingly? The purposes of God in regard to this great matter are no more objectionable than his acts. They were formed on the same grounds, and for the same reasons. Hence, those who have naught to object against the latter, ought not to object or complain in regard to the former.

We learn from the remarks which have been made (what was stated at the commencement of the Lecture), that the best mode of investigating the great, the solemn, and I had almost said the awful subject of God's eternal purposes, is to do it in the light of his works. To be sure, this subject is introduced in the Bible. We learn there the *fact* of God's purposes. We learn the extent and the character of them. We learn, too, in a few leading particulars, what these purposes are. By the mouth of his holy prophets, God has revealed them. But, for further information, we are referred expressly to his works. "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." The works of God fulfil his purposes. His works also reveal his purposes. And through the medium of his works his purposes—as to the nature, the character, and reasons of them—can best be understood. If true Christians would but look at this subject in the right direction, and study it in a proper spirit and manner, there would be little more difference of opinion in regard to it. All who are agreed touching the dispensations of God would be agreed as to his purposes; since the former are but the indexes and exponents of the latter.

It follows from what has been said, that those who are truly reconciled to the government of God will be reconciled to his purposes, so soon as they understand them. The objections of many to the purposes of God are the result, there can be no doubt, of misapprehension. They do not understand them correctly. They entertain mistaken views of them, — views to

which no Christian ought to be reconciled. But let any person understand the doctrine of God's purposes as he has revealed them, — as they are disclosed to us in his works and in his word, and if he loves the government of God he *will* love his purposes. If he is reconciled to the former he certainly *will be* to the latter. How can it be otherwise? As the works of God are but the carrying out, the completion, the consummation of his purposes, the character of both must be the same; and to quarrel with the one is virtually to quarrel with the other.

I trust that *we* may not have it in our hearts to quarrel with either. God is glorious in his dispensations. They are all fraught with wisdom and with goodness. They may seem dark and trying to us at times, but we know that they are all aimed, designed, and most wisely planned, to promote the noblest ends, — the highest glory of the Creator, and the highest good of the intelligent universe. Such are the sovereign dispensations of God; and what Christian does not love them, and rejoice in them?

But these works of God are not random efforts, put forth on special occasions and to meet emergencies. They are all of them parts of one infinite, eternal, and glorious plan. They all go to illustrate that plan. They serve to reveal it, and to fulfil it, — to carry it forward to its final consummation. And is it not a comforting thought that God *has* such a plan; that he works according to it; that no event is unforeseen or in vain; but that all are conspiring in the purpose of God and in his providence, to promote his highest glory and the greatest good? With views such as these, the Christian need never despond or be afraid. He can sympathize with the Psalmist, when he said: "I set the Lord always before my face; therefore, I shall not be moved;" and with Paul, when he said: "Rejoice in the Lord *always*, and again I say, *Rejoice*."

LECTURE XVIII.

ABUSES AND USES OF THE DOCTRINE OF GOD'S PURPOSES.

My present object will be to point out, first, the more common *abuses*, and, secondly, the practical *uses* of the great doctrine which has been before us in the preceding Lectures.

1. It is an abuse of the purposes of God to endeavor to *pry into* the nature and grounds of them, any farther than these are revealed. In some leading particulars God has been pleased, by his holy prophets, to make known his purposes. But beyond these particular revelations or predictions, we have no knowledge. We are left in utter, blank ignorance. Men have not been satisfied, however, to remain in ignorance. Attempts have been made, in all ages, to open the sealed book, and pry into the secret counsels of the Most High. This was the object of the various pretences to divination and augury, which prevailed among the ancient heathen. This is the object of soothsayers and fortune-tellers of the present day. Nor are those who think and talk about religion entirely free from this error. Some persons presumptuously decide that they are not in the number of God's elect, and give themselves over to consequent despair. With equal presumption, others decide that they *are* in the number of the elect, and, in a vain confidence of heaven, neglect to prepare for it. Some rashly conclude that individuals around them are certainly reprobates, and relinquish all effort for their conversion and salvation. Conclusions of this nature, and the practices growing out of them, are very likely to be sinful. They are an unwarrantable prying into those secret things which belong only to the Infinite Mind.

And it is equally presumptuous, in most cases, to decide as to the *grounds* or *reasons* of God's determinations. What can we

know respecting the reasons of them, any farther than these are unfolded in his works, or in his word? He doubtless *has* reasons, the best reasons, for what he purposes and what he does; and in some few instances these may be plain to us. But beyond where they are made plain we have no occasion, nor are we at liberty to search.

2. It is an abuse of God's purposes to set them in opposition to *human freedom and responsibility*. This has been often done, and is done now. "If God has an eternal purpose, according to which all events are ordered, then man is a machine. He *must* act just as he does, and has no freedom or responsibility left." But is not this a rash and unwarrantable inference? Is it not rushing upon a conclusion in the dark? So much has been said on this subject in my previous Lectures, that I need not enlarge upon it here. The fact of God's eternal purposes is, on the one hand, demonstrable. On the other hand, we know that man is a free agent. He has all the freedom which a creature can have, and freedom enough to render him entirely responsible. Suppose, then, that we cannot reconcile these two ideas. Are we sure that they cannot be reconciled, and that we are authorized to set the one in opposition to the other? Who of the sons of earth is competent to draw such a conclusion as this?

3. It is an abuse of God's purposes to *confound them with his law*, or to undertake to accomplish them in violation of his law. Misguided and unprincipled men have not unfrequently attempted to do this. "Manifest destiny," and not the law of God, has been the guide and principle of their actions. Thus the Crusaders, believing that it was God's purpose that the infidels in Palestine should be destroyed, entered heartily upon the bloody work of destroying them. The advocates of slavery sometimes think to justify themselves, by alleging the divine purpose that negroes should be slaves. The wasters and destroyers of the aborigines of this country have often urged the same argument. "It is undoubtedly the purpose of God that the red man should disappear before the white man. Therefore, let us be rid of him as soon as possible." But all such modes of judging are in the highest degree delusive and unwarrantable. The

law of God is to be the rule of our actions. His great plan of providence is a very different matter. This is known but in a few particulars, and so far as known, was never intended to be to us a rule of conduct. David knew it was the purpose of God that Saul should be overthrown, and that he should have the kingdom of Israel. But David did not feel authorized, on this account, to take the life of Saul. Jeremiah knew it was the purpose of God that the Jewish capital and temple should fall into the hands of the king of Babylon. Still, he did not think himself authorized, on this account, to unite with the Babylonians in the work of destruction.

4. It is an abuse of God's purposes to set them in opposition to *the calls and invitations of the gospel.* The invitations of the gospel are made alike to all men. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Whosoever will, let him come, and take the waters of life freely." These universal invitations are made by the Saviour in all sincerity. And those who preach the gospel of Christ are required to urge them sincerely, earnestly, and indiscriminately, upon all their hearers. But in doing this, ministers have sometimes felt an embarrassment from the doctrine of God's purposes; more especially his purpose of election. "If God has purposed to save only a part of the human race, why does he extend his invitations to all? How can he do it with sincerity? And how can I (believing, as I do, the doctrine of election) invite and urge all men to come to the knowledge of the truth?" This is not the place to attempt reconciling the doctrine of election with the free and universal invitations of the gospel. Nor if it were, after what was said in a former Lecture, would such a labor be at all necessary. That both doctrines are true, and consequently *reconcilable*, there can be no doubt. Whether we can reconcile them or not, to the view of God, they are, beyond question, harmoniously consistent. Consequently, it is an abuse of these important Christian verities, to array them one against the other. It is an abuse of God's invitations to array them against his purposes; and it is an abuse of his purposes to array them against his invitations. The minister of God's truth may safely follow Christ and his inspired apostles, in respect to this matter. Let

him present the invitations of the gospel, and urge its motives, with as much impression and power, and with as little embarrassment of any kind, as though God had not formed or revealed any purpose at all respecting the final salvation of men.

5. It is an abuse of God's purposes to make them the occasion of *inducing sloth*, or *discouraging effort*, on the part of Christians. Professing Christians believe that God has purposes respecting the salvation of individuals; that he is able to accomplish his purposes; that all his elect will be gathered in; and in these views they sometimes find a pillow for their consciences, and an excuse for sloth. This excuse is the more dangerous, because it is associated, usually, with high notions of orthodoxy. Persons, under its influence, think themselves very orthodox, it may be almost exclusively so, while they pervert their orthodoxy to purposes of sloth and carnal indulgence.

It is remarkable that the excuse here spoken of is allowed to have influence *only* in the concerns of religion. God's purposes extend to all other events, as well as to the final salvation of individuals. It is as certain, in the spring, whether or not the husbandman shall have a crop, as whether the souls of his children and neighbors shall be saved. Yet he uses all necessary means to secure the one, while he leaves it to what he calls divine sovereignty to take care of the other. How long shall the children of this world be wiser in their generation than the children of light? And how long shall the professed children of light be wiser in things pertaining to this world, than in those pertaining to the kingdom of Christ?

6. Impenitent men abuse the purposes of God, when they urge them as an excuse for *continuing in sin*. This species of abuse is near akin to the one last mentioned, and is of continual occurrence. How many are there who, when pressed on the subject of religion, are ever ready to reply: "Why should we give ourselves any trouble about it? If it is the purpose of God to save us, we shall be saved; and if not, we cannot be, let us do what we may." I hardly need say that we have here an egregious abuse of the doctrine of God's purposes, and an application of it to the concerns of religion, which is never made in the ordinary affairs of life. The avaricious man does not say:

"If it is the purpose of God that I shall gain an estate, it will come to me; and if not, I cannot obtain it; and, therefore, I will give myself no trouble on the subject." Nor does the ambitious man say: "If it is the purpose of God that I shall rise to honorable distinction, I certainly shall; and if not I cannot; and why should I exert myself any more?" In worldly things men know very well how to unite their faith in the purposes of God with vigorous and persevering efforts to secure the objects of their desire; and why should they be less knowing, or less earnest, in securing the salvation of their souls?

7. Those abuse the purposes of God who draw from them arguments tending to diminish, if not destroy, *a sense of sin*. There is no end to the deceptions which men are willing to practise on themselves, and no shifts too absurd for them to make in excuse for their wickedness. The doctrine of God's purposes has sometimes been held in such a way as to destroy the very existence of sin, and render it impossible that sin should exist. "The purposes of God," it is said, "fix everything, and everything takes place exactly according to them. One man answers the end of his existence as well as another. One man does the will of God as well as another. None have it in their power to break his decrees, or act contrary to his eternal counsels." It is remarkable that the abettors of this philosophical mania are as quick to feel and to resent injuries as any persons in the world. But why, according to your principles, resent an injury? The man who defames and robs you, who fires your house, or murders your family, you say, answers the end he was made for, and does the will of God, as truly as the most virtuous citizen. He fulfils his destiny, and could not do otherwise. Why, then, be angry with him, or seek his hurt? If, in order to escape the restraints of religion and the punishment of sin, you are willing to be machines or blocks, then carry your system out, and be consistently so. And let not one block be angry with another block, because that other block has been jostled against it to its injury.

8. Men abuse the purposes of God when they undertake to decide, *à priori*, what they *must be*, in contradiction to the plain teachings of the Bible. The Scriptures inform us that a portion

of our race, notwithstanding all that has been done for them, will persist in their sins, and perish forever. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power." But a metaphysical argument has been constructed, based on the purposes of God, which goes to contradict these declarations of his Word. "If God is infinitely wise and good, then his plan must secure the highest good to all men. And as this great plan will be infallibly executed, the highest good of all will certainly be attained. How, then, can any of the creatures of God be made forever miserable?"

Were I disposed to criticise this specious argument, a variety of questions might be asked respecting it, and objections insurmountable might be urged. But this is no part of my present plan. We know that the argument is fallacious, and presents a perverted view of God's purposes, because it contradicts, first, the plain declarations of his Word, and, secondly, the experience and observation of all mankind. By the mode of reasoning here used, we might prove just as well that there is no sin or misery in *this* world, as that there will be none in the other world. Yet who would rely on his metaphysics, in opposition to his own experience and his senses, to prove that there is no sin or misery on the earth?

I have now exhibited some of the more common perversions of the doctrine of God's purposes. It may be thought that a doctrine, so liable to abuse and perversion, ought not to be meddled with. If true, it ought not to be preached or publicly discussed. But why should men think to be wiser than God? If God has set this doctrine before us, in his works and in his word, then it is right for men to study it, and endeavor to understand it. It ought, indeed, to be handled wisely, and to be explained with care. But the perversions and abuses of it furnish no sufficient reason why it should be rejected or neglected.

But this will more fully appear, as I proceed to touch, very briefly, on some of the important *uses* of the doctrine in question. This doctrine is of use,—

1. As it gives us *the most exalted ideas of God*. It repre-

sents him, not only as existing before all beings, but as exalted to an infinite height above them all;—as exercising a universal and uncontrollable sovereignty. It was in eternity that he formed his plan;—a plan extending through all space and time, to all beings and worlds;—a plan needing no alteration or amendment; which has been carried forward thus far with an unfaltering hand, and will be carried out to a complete and endless fulfilment. In view of a doctrine such as this, it will be seen that God can be under no apprehension from the wrath and malice of his enemies. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." He can never be disappointed, defeated, or surprised. He will bring light out of darkness, and good out of evil; will cause the wrath of man to contribute to his praise, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain.

2. The purpose of God respecting the final salvation of his people is fitted deeply to *humble them*, and give them a strong sense of obligation to *his distinguishing mercy*. It teaches them that their salvation is not of themselves; but that from beginning to end, from eternity to eternity, from the foundation to the top stone, it is all of *sovereign grace*. In view of a doctrine such as this, the people of God are led to exclaim: "Who hath made us to differ! And what have we that we have not received!" At the same time, they are penetrated with a sense of obligation to him "who hath saved them, and called them with a holy calling, not according to their works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus, before the world began."

3. The eternal purposes of God furnish strong ground of *support, comfort, and confidence* to his people, under trials. In the belief of this doctrine, they regard no affliction as coming from the dust, or trouble as springing out of the ground. The ills they meet with, of whatever nature, are but parts of a boundless and perfect plan,—necessary links in that endless chain, which stretches from eternity to eternity, and is leading onward, through scenes of present mystery and darkness, to the most glorious results. And, with such impressions, how can they repine? How can they but rejoice and be happy?

And the case is much the same in trials of a *public* nature; in those relating to the kingdom of Christ. In view of these, the Christian feels, often, that he could have no support were it not for the universal and unchangeable purposes of God. But, resting on these, he is not dismayed in the midst of present calamities or in prospect of impending evils. For high above the black clouds which thicken around him and shut out the sun, he sees God upon the throne. A Being of infinite wisdom and goodness reigns, and nothing takes place but in accordance with his eternal councils. Confiding in him,—in the stability and perfection of his holy government, and in the assured fulfilment of all his purposes, the Christian has sources of consolation which no outward circumstances can interrupt or destroy. For though the earth be removed out of its place, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, the foundations of his trust and peace are unshaken forever.

4. The purposes of God, and more especially his *revealed* purposes, afford the greatest encouragement to his people *to labor in his service*. Sometimes these purposes are made the occasion of inducing sloth; but this, as I have before said, is a wicked perversion of them,—a turning of them aside from their legitimate design and influence. They are calculated to increase effort, and not discourage it; to quicken the children of God in his service, and not lead them to fold their hands in sloth. When Daniel understood that the set time had come for his captive people to be restored, he "set his face the *more earnestly* unto the Lord, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes." So when the disciples, before the Pentecost, were waiting the fulfilment of their Lord's prediction as to the descent of the Holy Ghost, they "continued daily, with one accord, in prayer and in supplication." There is no more efficient motive to exertion in any great and difficult undertaking, than the *assurance of success*. But the revealed purposes of God assure his people of the entire ultimate success of all their labors for the promotion of his cause and kingdom. Not a prayer can be offered, in behalf of his holy kingdom, which shall not be heard. Not a hand can be lifted, or an effort

made to promote its interests, which shall not tend to hasten its predicted triumphs.

5. The purposes of God are of use to *try the feelings of men, test their characters*, and *make them known to themselves*. There is not a doctrine of the Bible more eminently calculated to do all this than the one which has been considered in these Lectures. The true friends of God love to see him exalted; and for this reason they love the doctrines of his supremacy, his sovereignty, and of his eternal and unchangeable purposes. They love to contemplate him as "working all things after the counsel of his own will," and overruling all things — not excepting the wrath and malice of his enemies — for his own brighter glory, and for their deeper disgrace and ruin.

But this view of God the hearts of those who are not reconciled to him cannot bear. They invariably rise up against it, and pour forth their feelings in murmurs and complaints. "Why doth he yet find fault; for who hath resisted his will?" "I know thee, that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed."

6. Still another use of the doctrine under consideration is, *to abase the pride* and *bring down the high thoughts and looks of the wicked*. This it does by showing them that their designs against God and against the people of God, however bold and daring they may be, can never prosper. They are sure to be defeated and turned against themselves. They cannot cross the great plan of God's providence. They cannot cause one of his purposes to fail. On the contrary, their efforts against him (though they mean not so, neither do their hearts think so) can only accomplish what "his hand and counsel before determined should be done."

By their wickedness, sinners may destroy themselves; but they can do nothing, ultimately, against God or his kingdom. His name will be glorious, though they be not gathered; and the mansions above will all be filled, though they reject the proffered grace, and have no portion there.

It is of the utmost importance that the doctrine of divine purposes be used and applied in a proper manner. The objections and prejudices against the doctrine have arisen, in no

small degree, from its perversions and abuses. That there are difficulties attending this great subject,—that questions may be raised respecting it which, with our present means of knowledge, it may be difficult to answer,—need not be denied. Still, it is a doctrine of God's revealed Word, and we have no right to use it as a means of puzzling and perplexing either ourselves or our fellow-men. We have no right to misstate, pervert, and abuse it, in any of the ways which have been pointed out. Let the purposes of God be introduced whenever we have occasion to exalt his glorious character, or to humble and affect the hearts of his people, or to give them support and confidence under trials, and encourage them to pray and labor in his service; or when we wish to test the character and try the feelings of the human heart, or to check the pride and silence the boastings of the wicked;—let the doctrine before us be introduced in such connections, and for such purposes, as it always is by the inspired writers; and its influence will be good,—*all good;* and its truth and importance will be universally acknowledged. True Christians, the world over, will receive it, love it, cling to it, and be sanctified by it. They will rejoice in it as a ground of hope, of confidence, of comfort, which can never be taken from them.

LECTURE XIX.

CREATION—THE ANGELS.

In several Lectures, we have been considering the doctrine of God's universal and eternal purposes, — the great plan which was before him in eternity, and in accordance with which all events are transpiring, and will transpire, throughout the universe. From this we naturally proceed to the *works* of God, by which his purposes are successively fulfilled and revealed. We commence with the first of all his works, *creation*.

By creation, we mean something more than *the making of one thing from another*. *We* can make one thing from another. With the appropriate materials, we can make many things. And by most of the ancient heathen philosophers creation was supposed to be nothing more, *in kind*, than this. Assuming the axiom, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, they maintained the existence of two eternal, independent principles, *God*, and elemental, chaotic *matter;* and taught that, out of these chaotic elements, God made the world. But it is evident that a world thus made would not be a proper *creation*. It would rather be a *formation* or *fabrication*.

Again; by creation we do not mean the *emanation* of existing things from the very substance of God. This doctrine was held by some of the ancients, and it has its advocates in modern times. But it has no foundation either in reason or Scripture. If all things are from the substance of God, then they are *independent* and *indestructible* like God; which we have no reason to suppose is true. They are also *parts* of God; and this involves the absurdity that the infinite God is made up of parts. It involves, also, the *mutability*, the *changeableness* of God; for certainly there are continual changes going on in the world

around us; and if the world and all it contains are of the very substance of God, then there are continual changes in his substance. Our Saviour also tells us that "God is *a spirit*" (John iv. 24). But this world is not spirit. How, then, can it be from the very substance of God?

But we need not pursue this heathenish, pantheistic, infidel notion any further. As I said, it has no foundation in reason or Scripture, and should not be named where the Bible is known.

By creation, we understand the making of all created things from *nothing*. God made them all, not out of himself, nor from eternal, elemental matter, but from *nothing*. He brought them *into being*. He *gave them existence* when, before, they had none. This is what we understand by the work of creation; and this is the view given of it in the Scriptures. The Hebrew word, translated *create*, properly (though perhaps not invariably) means as much as this. That it signifies this in the first chapters of Genesis is evident from a distinction made by Moses himself. "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which he had *created and made*"; — importing that he first *created* the materials; and afterward, *made* or *fashioned* them into the existing world. This distinction appears, also, in the narrative of Moses. After the original creation, which could have extended only to the materials, we are told that they were "without form and void," and required to be digested, arranged, *made over*, into a suitable residence for man.

The same view is presented us in the 90th Psalm, which is said to have been written by Moses. The substance of the created world is here set forth, not as *coeval*, *coeternal with God*, but as *subsequent to him*, *by everlasting ages*, and as *the work of his hands*. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

This view of creation was held by the Jews in all periods of their history. Thus it is said in the Maccabees: "Look upon the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, and consider that *God made them of things that were not;*" — in other

words, made them from nothing (2 Macc. vii. 28). And Philo says: "The things which existed not *God called into being.*"

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul gives us the same view of creation: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that the things which are seen *were not made of things which do appear;*"—as much as to say that they were made from nothing (Heb. xi. 3).

In the first verse of the Bible it is said that "God created *the heavens and the earth.*" "The *heavens*,"—what are we to understand by these? The Hebrews speak of *three heavens;* viz., the *visible* heavens, or the firmament above us; the *starry* heavens,—the region of the planets and stars; and the *celestial* heavens, where are the glorified saints and angels, and where is the throne of God himself. Now the declaration of Moses is, that God *created* all these. He created the glorious expanse above us. He created all the stars of light. He created "the third heavens," the celestial heavens, to be his own peculiar abode, and the dwelling-place of angels and glorified spirits forever.

The original inhabitants of heaven—the first and oldest of God's intelligent creatures of which we have any knowledge—are *the angels.* Of the actual existence of angels, we have the most abundant proof. They often appeared to men in ancient times, conversed with them, and brought them messages from God. Their history is intimately connected with that of our Saviour, and of most of the worthies mentioned in the Scriptures. The substance of what we are permitted to know respecting the angels will be exhibited under the following particulars:—

1. They are *spirits.* "Who maketh his angels *spirits.*" "Are they not all ministering *spirits*, etc." (Heb. i. 7, 14). They have not gross bodies like our own, and (so far as appears) never had any. Some have thought them invested with ethereal, spiritual bodies, like those of the saints after the resurrection. Whether this be so, or not, we pretend not to say. But if it be *not* so; if the angels are pure spirits; still we are to conceive of them as *real, substantial beings.* There is a

spiritual substance as well as a material substance. God is a spirit; yet is not he a substantial Being? Spirit has more power over matter than matter has over spirit; which proves that the former cannot be less a substance than the latter.

Spirit is capable of being located; as we see in the case of our own spirits, which are at present united to our bodies, and confined to the earth. The home of angelic spirits is heaven. Still, they are not confined there. They ascend and descend on the ladder which reaches from earth to heaven (Gen. xxviii. 12). And not only so, they take time in passing from one world to the other. Thus, at the close of Daniel's prayer for the restoration of his people, the angel Gabriel, "being caused to *fly swiftly*," came to him and said; "At the *beginning* of thy supplication, the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved." (Dan. ix. 23). The language here imports that, during the whole time of Daniel's supplications, the angel was on his way. We have an instance of the same purport in the following chapter. Daniel had been mourning and fasting "three full weeks," or twenty-one days, when an angel came to him and said: "Fear not, Daniel; for from the *first day* that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one-and-twenty days,"—the whole time of Daniel's fast;—but, lo, Michael," another angel, "came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Persia. But now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days" (Dan. x. 12–14).

If some things in this passage are obscure, others are plain. It is plain that this mighty angel was sent forth at the commencement of Daniel's fast, and in answer to his prayer; but at the court of the king of Persia he was detained twenty-one days. Then Michael, another angel, came to his help, when he was soon released, and appeared to instruct and comfort Daniel. These circumstances seem to have been detailed by the angel, as an apology for his delay. The whole goes to show that angels, whether they are pure spirits or not, are real, substantial beings; that they exist *in place;* that they literally pass

from one place to another; and that some little time is consumed in passing. I now remark,—

2. That the angels are of *different orders*. Some are higher in capacity and power, in dignity, authority, and glory, than others. There are angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim. There are "thrones and dominions, principalities and powers" (Col. i. 16).

3. The angels were created before the human species, and probably before the creation of the world. That they are older than man is certain from the fact that one of them—originally an angel of light, but then a demon of darkness—was concerned in drawing our first parents into sin. That they existed before the creation of the world is clearly intimated in what God said to Job: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth,—when *the morning stars sang together*, and *all the sons of God shouted for joy?*" (Job xxxviii. 7). These stars of the morning, these sons of God, could have been no other than the holy angels.

4. The angels are not only a different order of beings from men, but a *higher order*. They are endowed with greater capacities, and have more knowledge, wisdom, power, holiness, dignity, and glory. Man is said expressly to have been made "a little *lower* than the angels" (Ps. viii. 5). Paul also represents the nature of angels as distinct from, and superior to, the nature of the seed of Abraham (Heb. ii. 16).

The angels are called in Scripture, "*mighty* angels," they are also said to "excel in *strength*." One angel destroyed more than a hundred and eighty thousand men, in a single night, in the camp of the Assyrians (2 Kings xix. 35).

The angels excel also in *wisdom* and *knowledge*. They were created originally with vast intellectual capacities and powers, and, through myriads of ages, they have been in a situation the most favorable to mental growth and improvement. They have been in the best school in the universe, — a place where truth reigns triumphant, where knowledge is universally sought and diffused, where the deep things of God are gradually unfolded. Their expanding powers know no weariness or decay, while they drink in divine wisdom from the fountain-head, ever accu-

pied in studying the works of God and beholding his glory. It is because of their vast attainments in wisdom and knowledge, that the angels are represented in Scripture as "full of eyes" within and without (Ezek. x. 12). To be "wise according to the wisdom of an angel of God" was regarded by the Hebrews as the highest created wisdom (2 Sam. xiv. 17).

The angels are superior to the human race, not only in knowledge, but in *holiness*. Hence they are called in Scripture the *holy* angels, and the *elect* angels. They were originally formed in the moral image of God, and they have retained that image by constant and persevering obedience to the divine commands. We have seen what great advances the angels have made in knowledge. Unquestionably, they have made as great advances in holiness; so that they as far excel all other created beings in their moral, as in their intellectual attainments.

The angels are also beings of surpassing *dignity and glory*. This is evident from what has been already said. Possessing such high attainments as have been ascribed to them in knowledge, in wisdom, in holiness, and power, they must be pre-eminently glorious beings. And so they are ever represented in the Scriptures. They are called "thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers"; — names importing the highest dignity and authority. In their manifold appearances, also, they have descended, usually, in power and great glory. Witness the angel which descended at the resurrection of Christ. "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." Witness also the representations given of the holy angels, in the visions of Patmos. "I saw a mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire" (Rev. x. 1). "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory" (Rev. xviii. 1).

It must be kept in mind, however, whatever attributes are ascribed to angels, — that they are still finite and dependent beings. They are creatures, as well as we, and make no approaches to "the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity."

They are not self-existent, omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent, or in possession of any of the essential attributes of the Supreme Being.

5. The angels were once on *probation*. They had a trial. It seems to have been a part of God's original plan respecting his intelligent creatures, to try them for a time, before fixing them in their eternal state. Thus, our first parents, almost as soon as created, were placed on trial; and human beings in this world now are having their probation. As to the particular injunctions laid upon the angels, and the adverse influences brought to bear upon them, by means of which they were tried, we are not informed. There have been many conjectures on the subject, but nothing is certainly known. The great object of their probation, undoubtedly, was to test their obedience;—to see whether, under circumstances of trial, they would persevere in holiness, and prove themselves worthy of the everlasting favor and blessing of God.

6. While the angels were on probation, a portion of them *fell into sin*. Of this original defection—the introduction of sin and misery into the universe—we are particularly informed in the Scriptures. Thus Jude says: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (v. 6). Also Peter tells us, "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. ii. 4). Our Saviour also speaks of the same event. "He," the devil, "was a murderer from the beginning, and *abode not in the truth*" (John viii. 44). Among the angels who fell at this time, some were of the highest orders. One in particular, who, after his fall, was called the Devil and Satan, seems to have been a chief among the angels of light. He was the leader in this primitive rebellion, and great multitudes (how many we know not) were drawn by him, and after him, into sin.

7. With the fall of the angels their probation, in all probability, ceased. Those of them who remained steadfast entered at once upon a state of confirmed holiness and bliss, where they should be no more exposed to temptation and sin; while, upon

those who fell the penalty of the violated law was immediately executed. They were cast out of heaven and thrust down to hell, where they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. These everlasting chains are not *literal* chains, with which the fallen angels are bound and confined; for it seems they are not confined. They still roam the earth. They "go about like roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour." But the devils are bound in chains of *darkness*. In other words, they are confirmed in a state of darkness and sin. All good influences are withdrawn from them, and they are left under the bondage of corruption forever.

Henceforward, then, we have two classes of angels, the obedient and the sinful, the holy and the fallen. It remains that we speak of the employments of each.

8. The employment of holy angels, since the fall and ruin of their rebel brethren, has been, in some respects, the same as before. They continue to study the works of God,—the revelations of his truth and will. They are growing continually in a knowledge of his character, with brighter visions of his glory. A new interest was given to these studies, after the introduction of sin into the universe; and more especially after the unfolding of the great work of redemption. Into this, we are told, "the angels desire to look"; since here, the very *heart* of the Deity is opened, and they behold manifestations of the love of God,—of his kindness and compassion, of his long-suffering grace and pardoning mercy, of which before they had no conception. I can conceive that Gabriel and all the angelic choirs see a hundred times more of the glory of God, and love, enjoy, and praise him a hundred times better than they could ever have done, but for the intervention of redeeming mercy.

But though the employments of angels have been in some respects the same since the lapse of their brethren that they were before, in other respects there has been a difference. They have been more appropriately called "*watchers*" since that event.

There is a foe abroad, vigilant and powerful, against whose mischievous wiles and machinations they are expected to be ever on their guard. Also, since the creation and fall of man, and the revelation of God's mercy toward him, holy angels have had

many new objects of regard and interest. The angels of God "encamp round about them that fear him, and deliver them." "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

The angels were employed to publish God's law to his ancient people at Sinai. Hence the law is described as the word "spoken by angels" (Heb. ii. 2); as having been given "by the disposition of angels" (Acts, vii. 53); and as having been "ordained by angels, in the hands of a Mediator" (Gal. iv. 19).

But besides being concerned in this great *public* revelation of God's will, angels have been frequently employed in bearing messages of mercy to particular individuals, both before and since the coming of Christ. Witness their messages to Abraham, to Lot, to Joshua, to Gideon, to Manoah and his wife, to Elijah and Elisha, to Zechariah the father of John the Baptist, to the Virgin Mary and her husband, to Cornelius and Peter and Paul, and the beloved disciple on the Isle of Patmos. Indeed, we find this ministry of angels to the heirs of salvation spoken of throughout the Bible, from beginning to end.

A still more special employment of the angels was to minister to our Lord Jesus Christ,—to serve and honor him during his abode on earth. They heralded his entrance into the world with songs of praise: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good-will to men." After his temptation in the wilderness, "angels came and ministered unto him." They strengthened him in the garden of Gethsemane; and more than twelve legions of angels stood waiting to rescue him from the hands of his murderers, if he had only asked for them. They watched over his lifeless body while it lay in the tomb; they rolled away the stone when he left the sepulchre; and when he was taken up into heaven they were visibly present, to assure the gazing disciples that their Lord would come again, "in like manner as they had seen him go into heaven."

Holy angels are not only messengers of mercy to God's suffering people, they are the executioners of his wrath against the wicked. Thus the angels said to Lot, in Sodom: "We will destroy this place, because the cry of it waxeth great before the Lord, and he hath sent us to destroy it" (Gen. xix. 13).

It was an angel that executed the divine displeasure against David and his kingdom, when he had sinned in numbering the people (2 Sam. xxiv. 16). In answer to the prayer of Hezekiah, "the angel of the Lord went out and smote, in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred fourscore and five thousand men" (2 Kings xix. 35). When Herod arrogated to himself divine honors, "immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory" (Acts xii. 23).

9. As to the employments of fallen angels or devils, the Scriptures leave us no room for doubt. For the trial of our race, they are permitted to roam the earth, and "to walk up and down in it." They have access to the minds of men, and exert all their skill and power to draw them into sin. They tempted our first parents to eat the forbidden fruit. They stripped Job of everything but his life, hoping thereby to provoke him to curse God and die. Satan tempted David to number Israel; he tempted our blessed Saviour in the wilderness; he put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him; and filled the heart of Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Ghost. He is said "to work in the children of disobedience," and "to blind the minds of them that believe not." In the first age of Christianity he exerted a terrible influence over the *physical* as well as moral condition of his victims, deranging their faculties and driving them to madness. In times yet future, this malicious spirit is to "go forth to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, and gather them together to the battle" of the great God (Rev. xx. 8). Hence the frequent admonitions and warnings which we find in the Bible, to be on our guard against his snares and wiles. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." "Be sober, be vigilant; for your adversary, the devil, goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

Notwithstanding the abundant evidence from Scripture in proof of the doctrine of fallen spirits, there are many at this day who deny their existence altogether. Whole bodies of men, calling themselves Christians, will not believe that there are any such beings. The language of Scripture on the subject is all

figurative. The devil of the Bible is only "the personified principle of evil." Of those who reason in this way, I would inquire, first of all: What is there at all *incredible* in the Scripture account of fallen angels, as above detailed, taking this account literally? Is it incredible that God should create spiritual beings, older, and of a higher nature than ourselves? And as they were not made to dwell in a material world like this, is it incredible that he should have failed to invest them in gross bodies of flesh and blood like our own? He has adapted us to the sphere in which we are at present placed; and why should he not adapt them for that higher sphere for which they were originally destined? Is it incredible that God should place these angelic beings for a time upon trial, that the strength of their moral principles might be tested and proved? Man was put upon trial when he was created; and why should not the angels have been treated in the same way? Again, is it incredible that, during their probation, a portion of these angels should fall into sin? It is strange, we know, that any intelligent creature should sin against God; and especially that holy beings should be led to do this. But our first parents sinned when they were holy; and why may not holy angels have done the same? In every view we can take of the subject, I can see nothing incredible in the fall and ruin of a portion of the angels, more than in the fall of man.

The Scripture testimony to the existence of fallen spirits, we have seen, is most explicit and abundant. It is found in all parts of the Bible. It is found, not merely in poetic description, but in sober narrative and prose. It is so inwrought into the sacred history that it can never be removed or explained away, without endangering the credit of the whole. Yea, more than this, it is so inwrought into the personal history of Christ, that it cannot be discredited without implicating his integrity and truth. Who tempted our Saviour in the wilderness, if there is no devil? With his pure nature, he could have had no temptations from within; and who could have assailed him from without but this arch enemy of all righteousness? What beings did Christ cast out of the Gadarene demoniac, and, at their request, send into the herd of swine, if there are no devils? And what

are we to make of the sentence which Christ assures us he will pass upon the wicked, at the judgment day, — "Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for *the devil and his angels*," if there are no such beings as fallen angels?

The grand argument, we have seen, for the existence of fallen spirits, is from the Bible. And yet this is not the only argument. The facts of God's providence, and of our own experience, indicate the same thing. Why are strange, unwelcome, seducing thoughts so frequently obtruded upon us,—not in the orderly train of our thoughts, but quite out of it,—obtruded upon us, it may be, in our devotions, — if there is no devil? Why, but upon the same supposition, do persons often fall when they least expected it, and plunge into the perpetration of foul and ruinous deeds, from which they supposed they were forever delivered? And how are we to account for those subtle and far-reaching *plans* of wickedness, which history unfolds to us, — plans extending often through ages and centuries, and which, of course, no one man, or generation of men, could have concerted, — but upon the supposition of just such an agency as that which the Scriptures ascribe to the devil and his angels?

The devil is not unwilling that men should deny his existence. If they will serve him well, they may deny him and rail at him as much as they please. He understands the tendency of all such practices. It is but to throw men off their guard, render them bold and reckless in sin, and thus prepare them the more easily to become his prey.

A denial of the doctrine of fallen spirits tends directly to infidelity. In order to make it, and carry it out, persons must accustom themselves to such a mode of treating the Bible, that they can no longer have any great respect for it. It has ceased to be to them a standard of truth. And besides, if the doctrine of fallen spirits can be taken out of the Bible, the doctrine of a personal God can be as well. If Satan is but the personified principle of evil, God is but a personification of the powers, processes, and laws of nature. There is no other God to be feared or served. So men in great numbers *have* said, and are saying now; and thus they run down, from one stage of infi-

delity to another, till they land in a dreamy Pantheism, which is no better, in its moral influence, than Atheism itself.

Let us beware, my young brethren, of the rock on which so many have made utter shipwreck of the faith. Let us receive the *whole doctrine of angels*, as God has revealed it, and draw from it all that instruction and profit which it is fitted to afford us. Let us rejoice and be thankful, in view of the ministry of *holy angels*,—a ministry which was not confined to the ancient believers, but belongs equally to us. And never shall we know, till it is revealed in eternity, how much we are indebted to the kind and watchful interpositions of these blessed angels. At the same time, let us "be sober and vigilant," in view of our exposedness to the machinations of those evil spirits who "go about like roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour." Who would lay off his armor, and go to sleep, in presence of such an enemy;—an enemy who sees us when we cannot see him; who knows all our weak sides and exposed points; and who will be sure to assail us how and when and where he can do it with the most effect?

10. I have but another remark to make in regard to the angels: They shall participate with us in the scenes and awards of *the final judgment*. We are expressly informed that this will be the case in respect to fallen angels. They are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 5, 6). And there is reason to believe that the same is true concerning the holy angels. They are to be the assistants and servants of Christ in preparing for the judgment. "The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just" (Matt. xiii. 49). And, having participated so largely in the scenes and events of our probation, they will stand and be judged with us in the final day. Indeed, it is not easy to see how our own judgment can proceed on any other supposition. "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall *judge angels?*" (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3).

The subject which has been before us gives us a startling view of the ultimate destination of the human race. The angels are our superiors now; but the time is coming, our Lord assures

us, when, if we are the children of God, we shall be their equals (Luke xx. 36). We shall be as tall, as wise, as holy, and as blessed as they. O glorious assurance of the Saviour! Blessed prospect to be held out to the toiling, suffering people of God!

But, to this bright hope there is a terrible counterpart. If the children of God shall one day be equal to the holy angels, the time is coming when reprobate men will be like the demons; —as malicious, as hateful, as miserable as they. Which, my beloved brethren, shall *we* be like? Where, in the long cycles of eternity, shall our immortal souls be found?

LECTURE XX.

CREATION OF THIS WORLD.

In my last Lecture, I treated of creation in the general; showed in what it consists; and spoke particularly of the *angels*, as the oldest of God's intelligent creatures of which we have any knowledge. In what follows, I shall speak of the creation of *this world* and *its inhabitants*.

When was this world created? If created at all, it must be a creature of *time*. There was a time when it was not,—a time when its existence commenced. *When was this time?*

In the first verse in the Bible it is said: "*In the beginning*, God created the heavens and the earth." This announces, we think, the *original creation*,—the creation of the world in its *chaotic, elemental state*. God now *created—brought into being*—the rudiments, the elements of all material things. This great event took place *in time;* but we have no data by which to determine the time. It must have been at a period vastly remote. It took place in the very *beginning* of God's works; but, when this beginning was, no tongue can tell.

Some have supposed that the original creation of which we speak took place about six thousand years ago,—at the time when this earth was first fitted up for the residence of man. But this, I am satisfied, is a mistake. The narrative of Moses does not confine us to such an interpretation, and the ascertained facts of geological science contradict it.

The first verse of the Bible I regard as an independent, a most important (and considering the circumstances under which it was uttered) a most wonderful declaration, announcing that at *some* time—at some remote period in the ages of eternity—God did *create* the heavens and the earth. The remaining verses

of the chapter relate to a very different subject,—the fitting up of the earth for the residence of man;—an event which took place, according to our Hebrew chronology, about six thousand years ago.

As I have before remarked, we have no information in Scripture as to the time of the original creation, or as to the appearance or consistence of the earth at that period. Nor have we the slightest information as to the changes and revolutions of the world, or as to the forms of animal and vegetable life which it bore upon its surface during the remoter ages of its history. The geologist has space enough here for all his discoveries. He has scope enough for any conclusions to which he may reasonably come, without the remotest danger of trenching on the annunciations of revealed truth.

That a vastly long period intervened between the proper *creation* of the world, spoken of in the first verse in the Bible, and the commencement of the six days' work recorded in the following verses, there can be, as it seems to me, no reasonable doubt. It was during this period that the earth assumed a solid form. Its heated masses were cooled and conglomerated. The primary rocks were crystallized. The transition, the secondary, and the deeper portion of the tertiary rocks were deposited and petrified. The lower forms of animal and vegetable existence appeared and perished. Multitudes of marine and amphibious animals—some of them of huge and terrific forms—lived and died, and their remains became imbedded in the solid rocks. Vast quantities of vegetable matter also accumulated on the earth, and were treasured up beneath its surface, in the form of coal, for the future use and benefit of man.

It is evident that the earth, during this long period, underwent frequent and terrible revolutions. Its internal fires were raging in their prison-house, and often bursting through the crust which confined them. The mountains were upheaved from their deeper than ocean beds; trap-dikes were formed; and the stratified rocks were tilted from their original horizontal positions in every direction.

It was subsequent to one of these terrible revolutions which had torn the earth to its very centre, merged the greater part

of it beneath the ocean, and destroyed almost every trace of animal and vegetable existence, that mention is made of it in the second verse of the Bible. The earth was then תהו ובהו "formless and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

The earth was dark at this period, not because there was no sun, but because caliginous gases and vapors—like those in one of the plagues of Egypt—had utterly obscured the light of the sun, and shut it out from the desolate world.

But God had not abandoned the work of his own hands. He had nobler purposes to answer by this seemingly ruined world, than any which had hitherto been accomplished. It was no longer to be the abode of saurians and mastodons, and other huge and terrific monsters, but was to be fitted up and adorned for a new and nobler race of beings. Accordingly, the Spirit of God began to move upon the turbid waters, and order and quietness were gradually restored.

"And God said, Let there be light; and there was light." The dense clouds and vapors which had enveloped the earth, and shut out entirely the light of heaven, were so far dissipated that it was easy to distinguish between day and night.

On the second day, "God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God called the firmament heaven." The work here denoted was the elevation of the clouds and the separation of the aerial waters, by a visible firmament,—the seeming expanse of heaven,—from those which rested on the earth.

"And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass; the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind; and it was so. And the evening and the morning were the third day." In the course of this day vast portions of the earth's surface were elevated; others were depressed. Continents and islands were raised; and seas and oceans were made to know their bounds. As soon as the dry land appeared it began to be

clothed with vegetation. The forming hand of the Creator covered it—by miracle of course—with new species of trees and vegetables, in place of such as had been destroyed.

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night. And God made two *great* lights; the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day." The language here used does not import that the sun, moon, and stars were now first created, but only that they were first made to *shine out* upon the renovated earth. They now became *visible lights* to the world. The clouds and vapors had been so far dissipated on the first day that it was easy to distinguish between day and night; but now they were entirely dissipated, and the lights of heaven shone down upon the earth "in full-orbed splendor."

The representation, throughout this chapter, it will be perceived, is *phenomenal*, and not philosophical. It accords not with philosophical accuracy, but rather with what would have been the *appearance* of things, had there been any spectator on the earth at the time to observe them. Thus, when it is said that God made a *firmament*, we are not to understand that the seeming canopy above us is a literal *thing* or *substance*, but only that such is the appearance to a spectator on the earth. And when it is said that God made two great lights, and *set them in the firmament*, we are not to suppose that the sun and moon were now first created, and *set up* and *fastened* in the blue expanse, but that such would have been the appearance to man had he been in existence on the fourth day, when the sun and moon commenced their shining.

On the fifth day God peopled the waters with fishes, and the air with birds and flying fowls.

On the sixth day he brought forth the beasts of the earth, the cattle, and everything that creepeth, after its kind. He also created man in his own image. "Male and female created he them; and God blessed them," and gave them dominion over all the creatures that he had made.

On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; —the great work of renewing a desolate, chaotic world, pre-

paring it for the residence of man, and placing man and the other races of creatures upon it. "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which he had created and made." We have here the institution of the weekly Sabbath. It commenced with the renewal of the earth and the creation of its intelligent inhabitants, and is to continue till time shall be no more.

I have given this running commentary on the first chapter of Genesis, the better to illustrate the distinction between the original creation, spoken of in the first verse, and the six days' work described in the remainder of the chapter. The time of the original creation was vastly remote, beyond all human conception or calculation. The six days' work took place, in all probability, about six thousand years ago. Between these two great epochs there was a wide space,—wide enough to account for all the phenomena that geologists have ever discovered or ever will.

It will be seen that, in harmonizing the revelations of Scripture with the facts of science, I have not taken the ground (with some of my brethren) that the days spoken of in the first chapter of Genesis are not literal days, but *long, indefinite periods of time.* This I could not do, for several reasons. In the first place, we have in this chapter not only the word *day* (which, I admit, is sometimes used to denote a long period), but a *description* of each successive day. The *evening* and the *morning* were the first day, and the second day, and so of all the rest; thus showing that each day was limited to an evening and a morning, or to a single diurnal revolution of the earth. Then we have the seventh day,—a season of holy, blessed rest. Was this, also, an indefinitely long period? If so, what becomes of the primeval institution of the weekly Sabbath; and of the division of time into weeks of seven days, which we know prevailed as early as the deluge, and probably from the creation? (See Gen. viii. 10–12.) And what shall we say of the fourth commandment; and more especially of the reason assigned for its observance? "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it"

(Ex. xx. 11). There is here manifest reference to the institution of the Sabbath on the day following the creation, and a solemn injunction that we are to labor six days and rest the seventh, in commemoration of that great event. Does not this prove that the six days of the creation and the seventh of rest were each and all of them no more than literal days?

In other respects, too, the narrative in Genesis seems not to accord well with the idea that the days there spoken of were long cycles of years. On this supposition, the first day was naught but a vast period of mere twilight, or of alternate twilight and total darkness. And in the next long period, naught was accomplished but the elevation of the clouds and the presentation of an apparent firmament in the sky. Through the whole of the fifth cycle, however long it may have been, God was occupied with nothing but making fishes and fowls; and, during the sixth, with creating men, and beasts, and creeping things.

But my principal difficulty, on the supposition before us, is with the fourth cycle or day. Were the sun, moon, and stars in existence before this commenced? and if so, why should they be obscured through the whole of the three preceding cycles, so as never to shine upon the earth? How could they be? Or, if they were not in existence, how was the earth covered with vegetation during the third period without any sun? And how, without a sun, was the forming earth held in its orbit? Such are some of the difficulties of the *cycle* theory, aside from the philological argument exhibited above.

I know it will be said that six literal days do not afford sufficient time for the renewing, reorganizing and repeopling of the earth, unless we will suppose many things to have been accomplished almost instantly, and by miracle. All this we allow. We do suppose many things, very many, to have been accomplished almost instantly, and by miracle. And those who advocate indefinitely long periods must suppose the same. The formation of every new species, whether of animal or vegetable, was a miracle. There is a law of nature by which a species, once created, may propagate itself; but no law by which it may bring itself into being; or by which one species may generate

another, or may grow, develop, into another. I repeat, there is no such law as this; and hence the commencement of every new species involves a miracle, in whatsoever time or manner the work may have been accomplished. It is as much a miracle to from an acorn, and plant it, and let it grow into an oak, as it would be to form the oak itself. It is as much a miracle to form an infant, and then let him grow to a man, as it would be to form a man. There is no avoiding the supposition of miracles in the renewing and repeopling of the earth, in whatever manner the work may have been performed. But if we allow miracles to have been resorted to at the time of the creation, as all reasonable inquirers must, then six days, or even a less period (if such had been the pleasure of the great Creator) would have been amply sufficient for the performance of them all.

It will be said, further, that *our* interpretation of the six days' work is equally inconsistent with the fourth commandment, as the supposition of long periods of time. The commandment says, "In six days the Lord *made* heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is;" whereas we have said that the six days' work was only the *renewing* and *repeopling* of a previously created, but now chaotic and desolate world. In answer to this it may be said, that the original word translated *made* in the fourth commandment, does not import a literal *creation*, but rather the *shaping*, the *making* of one thing from another. In this sense the world was literally *made* in six days; not created, but *made over*,—made what it now is. The thick darkness which covered it was dissipated; the land and ocean were separated; the clouds were lifted up; the lights of heaven shone down upon it; it was fitted up for the present species of animals and vegetables, and they were placed upon it. This was the great work of the six days, as before explained; a work strictly accordant with the terms of the fourth commandment, and worthy to be commemorated in the weekly Sabbath.

It may be inquired again, on supposition this earth existed a long period before it was fitted up for the residence of man, why we have no account of this period in the Scriptures. In

return, it may be asked, Why should we have any such account? Of what use would it be, except to gratify mere curiosity? It was enough for the inspired writer to acquaint us, first, with the *original creation* of the world, thus cutting off all ground of pantheism and atheism; and, secondly, of its being *reorganized* and *fitted up* for the residence of man. These two are the only points in which we have any particular personal interest. To have proceeded further with the narrative, would have been to enter a field of scientific inquiry and curiosity, from which the pen of inspiration has been uniformly and wisely restrained.

It has been made a question, whether what we have called "the six days' work" was *universal;*—whether it extended all over the earth, or was confined to that part of the world where the human pair were originally placed. This latter opinion has some respectable advocates; but I see not how it can be consistently maintained. The language of Scripture clearly imports that what we commonly call the work of creation was universal. And from the very nature of the case, the greater part of this stupendous work *must* have been universal. The *earth*—the *whole* earth—the same that was originally created from nothing —was without form and void, and darkness rested upon the entire surface of the chaotic mass. And when the light of the first day began to shine it enlightened the whole of it. So when the firmament was lifted up, it covered, as it now does, the whole face of the earth. Also the seas and the dry land, the grass, the trees, the beasts, birds, fishes, and insects,—these are found everywhere. And the great lights of heaven,—these do not shine alone upon one little corner of the earth, but upon the whole of it. And so of the dominion which God assigned to man. "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." The setting apart of a day, too, for the purpose of celebrating the work of creation,—a day to be observed in all places, and through all time,—shows that this work was not confined to some little portion of the globe, but was one of universal interest and concern.

We have no sympathy with interpretations which would limit those stupendous displays of the divine power and wisdom,

goodness and justice, which were made at the creation, and afterward, in the deluge, to a small portion only of the Eastern continent, where man was originally placed. We see no necessity or authority for such limitations. They are contradicted both by the language of Scripture and the nature and circumstances of the events themselves. They belong to a class of interpretations (too common at this day) which would fritter away the language of the Bible till it no longer reveals anything which might not otherwise have been known as well.

If it is an extreme of statement to confound the original creation with "the six days' work," and suppose (with some) that the whole took place together about six thousand years ago, it is equally an extreme of statement to suppose the six days' work not to have extended to the whole earth, but only to a small portion of it.

I trust it will appear, from what has been said, that there is nothing in the Scriptural account of the creation which conflicts at all with any of the revelations of modern science. Christians have no reason to fear the deductions of true science. The world and the Bible are from the same divine author. The inscriptions on the imbedded rocks and on the sacred page are from the same hand. They cannot contradict each other. They never did, and, properly interpreted, they never will. Let the investigations of science be faithfully and thoroughly pursued, — the more thoroughly the better, — and its conclusions will always serve, not to confute, but to confirm, the declarations of revealed truth.

The science of geology, which infidels once boasted, and Christians feared, would overthrow the Bible, goes rather to establish it in several points. It removes entirely some of the more plausible objections which were once urged against the Bible, and against the being of a God. Christians are really under great obligations to the science of geology, and to those men who have so diligently and successfully pursued it. But let them not be too confident, or presume too far. Let them not frame hypotheses upon slight and insufficient grounds, and then attempt, by violence, to bring the decisions of Scripture into an accordance with them. Such a course may prejudice

religion for a time, but it will be sure in the end to injure the cause of science, and bring it into contempt.

The work of creation, which has been considered in this and the preceding Lecture, is one highly honorable to the Supreme Being. It displays his infinite wisdom and goodness, his uncontrollable sovereignty, his almighty power, his perfect fitness to reign over all the works of his hand. The creation of *this world* was an event so honorable to God as to become an occasion of great rejoicing to all the higher orders of intelligent creatures, who were in existence to behold it. "When I laid the foundations of the earth; when I stretched out the line upon it; when I placed the corner-stone thereof," then "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." This great event is still the occasion of rejoicing and praise, both to saints on earth and angels in heaven. "While I live," says the Psalmist, "I will praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have my being." Why? "Thou hast made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is" (Ps. civ). And while this song is heard on earth, the angels are sounding forth in heaven: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast *created all things*, and for thy pleasure they are and they were created" (Rev. iv. 11).

If God is the creator of all things, then his intelligent creatures are bound to love him, to confide in him, to acquiesce in his glorious sovereignty, to submit to his will, to serve and glorify him forever. This may be thought a long inference, but it is a just one. Every part and member of it is indisputably just. The work of creation shows, not only that God is the absolute proprietor of his creatures, and has a right to do what he will with his own; but that he is worthy of their supreme love, confidence, and praise. They ought to love him for what he is. They ought to trust in him, to obey and serve him, to submit to his will, to rejoice in his government, to praise his glorious name, and that forever. Their duty, in this respect, is so plain that it cannot be mistaken. They cannot resist or neglect it without incurring the blackest guilt.

LECTURE XXI.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

"GOD'S works of providence," to borrow the language of the Westminster divines, "are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions."

According to this definition, the first work of providence is the *upholding* or *preserving* of created things. This is, in Scripture, expressly ascribed to God, or (which is the same) to Christ. "*Upholding* all things by the word of his power" (Heb. i. 3). "By him all things *consist*" (Col. i. 17). This work of *upholding* has been represented by Descartes, and by President Edwards, as no other than a continual creation. "God's *preserving* created things in being," says Edwards, "is perfectly equivalent to a continued creation, or to his creating those things out of nothing at each successive moment of their existence." Again, "God's *upholding* created substance, or causing its existence in each successive moment, is altogether equivalent to an immediate production out of nothing at each moment."[1] But, with all due deference to so great names, we must think that this is quite an extreme of statement. It is confounding the works of creation and providence, which the Scriptures everywhere represent as distinct. It is true, indeed, that there is no *necessary* connection between the present existence of a created thing and its continued existence even at the next moment, so that being once created it can *exist on* of itself. Still, a created thing is an actually existing thing. It is *in* being. And to continue it in being cannot be the same as to bring it into being. The upholding of all things is a work of God's power. It is *so* the work of his power, that should he withdraw

[1] Edwards' Works, Vol. vi. p. 451. Worcester Edition.

his supporting hand, no created being or thing could continue in existence for a moment. Still, I cannot conceive of it as a perpetual creation. The work of creation brings something *into being*. The work of preservation, which is one part of the great work of providence, continues that existence which creation had given.

This work of preservation not only continues created things in existence, it continues them in the possession of their appropriate qualities and attributes, and in subjection to the laws which were originally impressed upon them. Material things it holds in being, possessed of all the properties and subject to all the conditions and laws of matter. It also sustains in existence created minds, with all the conditions, laws, and properties pertaining to them.

And here, in the estimation of some, the work of providence ends. "It is enough," they say, "that God has created the worlds of matter and of mind; that he has given to each its peculiar properties, motions, and laws; and that, in the full possession of these, he holds each in existence. The great machine is now in operation, and if sustained it will run on of itself. It needs not the present power of the great Architect to supply the requisite momentum, or to guide its wheels." But it will be seen, as we proceed, that this is a very inadequate view of providence. If the theory of Edwards went to one extreme of statement, this goes quite as much to the other.

The second work of providence, according to the definition above quoted, is that of *governing*. "Preserving and *governing* all his creatures, and all their actions." This implies, in the first place, the absolute *disposal* of things in providence. God is the supreme *disposer* of events. All the changes taking place in the universe, from the highest to the lowest, from the greatest to the least, in the worlds of matter and of mind, are the results, in some way, of his control. They are all to be included in his work of providence.

But besides this and beyond it there is another work of providence which may, in stricter propriety, be denominated *government*. I refer to God's *moral* government; or the government which he administers over free, moral, responsible agents. That

God has created responsible agents, that he upholds them by his power, and has undertaken to govern them, not by physical force, but by laws and motives, no believer in divine revelation can doubt. It is to this work of providence that special reference is had when God is set forth as "a great King." He administers a government like other kings; a government which is sustained by laws and motives, rewards and punishments. This work of *moral* government, considered in all its relations and bearings, is doubtless of more importance than anything else in the providence of God.

The entire work of providence, we have said already, is to be regarded as God's work. It is under the direction of his infinite wisdom and goodness, and is executed by his power. Still, it is not all executed after the same manner. To dispose of material substances is one thing; to govern mind another; and to control a large class of events, through the instrumentality of created minds, is quite another. Yet all are to be regarded as in one way or another, directly or indirectly, subject to the control of the Supreme Disposer.

The providence of God is *universal* and *particular*. In the first place it is *particular*. It extends to particular things, and even to the minutest things. Some persons seem to regard the Supreme Being as disposing of things only in the general. The greater and more important events are subject to his control, while those of less consequence are suffered to take place at random. But there is the same reason for supposing God to direct small events, as great ones. Atoms can no more move themselves, independent of God, than worlds can. Besides; who but the omniscient God can determine what events are great, and what small? Things may seem little to us which, in their connections, are of great consequence. A spark of fire is a little thing, but it may cause an explosion, or a conflagration, which shall be the ruin of multitudes. A floating atom, or a flying insect, may bear on its seemingly little bosom the fate of a monarch, or the destiny of an empire. Great effects are often the result of little causes; so that if the government of God does not reach to the smallest things, as well as the largest, his purposes are liable to be continually frustrated. Accordingly,

the Scriptures represent the work of providence as in the strictest, minutest sense particular. "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father," and "the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt. x. 29). "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 33).

Moreover, the providence of God is strictly *universal*, extending to all created beings and things throughout the universe. That the providence of God extends to all *material* things; — that it is concerned in all the *physical* changes which are taking place, it is presumed that none but an atheist will deny. But there are those who doubt whether it reaches to the *moral* world, and is concerned in directing the free actions of men.

It may help to satisfy us on this point to consider that, unless the providence of God does extend to the moral world, his government is comparatively a small matter. Of how much consequence can it be to him, or to any of his creatures, that he should roll worlds in their orbits, and direct the manifold operations of nature, if he has no efficient providential control over the countless myriads of immortal minds which he has created, and with which the intelligent universe is filled?

Besides, if God has no efficient control over minds, how has he fulfilled his predictions in time past? And how shall he be expected to fulfil them in time to come? These predictions have respect, in most instances, to the free, responsible actions of men; and how is it possible for God to fulfil them, unless he can control the actions of men consistently with their freedom?

Again, if God has no efficient control over the hearts and actions of men, how is he to answer prayer? The favors which God's people seek at his hands in prayer are chiefly of the *moral*, *spiritual* kind, relating to the feelings and actions of creatures, — the state of their own hearts, and the hearts of others; and how is it possible for God to answer such prayers, to bestow such favors, unless he has the hearts of men in his hand, to turn them whithersoever he will?

Still, again; if God has no efficient control over the hearts of his creatures, how is it that he converts sinners, and sanctifies

believers, and carries forward his holy, spiritual kingdom in the earth? The conversion of a sinner consists in a change of heart,—a change in his moral feelings, affections, and character. And the sanctification of the believer consists in a further advance of the same divine work; a progression in the exercise and due manifestation of holy affections. In Scripture, these works are both of them ascribed to God; and they obviously imply that the hearts of creatures are in his hand, to be turned, changed, controlled as he pleases, without at all impairing their moral freedom.

It hardly need be said that the agency of God in the moral world is directly asserted, and much insisted on, in the Bible. It may seem almost superfluous to refer to passages. "The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. xvi. 1; xxi. 1). God represents the king of Assyria as being as really in his hands (though, of course, in a different sense) as the axe is in the hands of the hewer, or the saw in the hands of him who shaketh it, or as the rod and the staff are in the hands of those that lift them up (Is. x. 5-15). "Thou hast wrought all our works in us" (Is. xxvi. 12). "It is God that worketh in you to will and to do, of his good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 13).

Let no one think to escape from these, and hundreds of similar Scriptures, on the ground that it was not the object of the sacred writers to teach any particular system of psychology. We do not quote them as teaching any particular system of psychology, but as proving an important *Christian doctrine*,—a great *theological fact*. We quote them to prove that the reign of God is universal; that he governs the moral world not less than the natural; that his providential control extends to the hearts and actions of men, as well as to the circumstances of their lives. And all this the inspired writers assert, in terms the most plain and incontestible. If as much as this cannot be proved from their language, nothing can.

The manner in which God exercises his government over the moral world, we may not be able fully to explain. Of course,

it is not by physical force, as in the natural world; but rather through the instrumentality of truth, of motives, of moral considerations,—in a manner agreeing perfectly with the nature and properties of the human mind.

In the kingdoms of both matter and mind, the providence of God is administered in accordance with *established laws*. It moves on steadily, regularly (except that, in some instances, it has been interrupted by miracles), so that the subjects of it may learn what to expect, and on what to depend. In the *material* world, what are commonly called the laws of nature are but established modes of divine operation. And the laws of mind are as regular, and as much of divine ordination, as those of matter. The providence of God extends to both worlds alike. In both, he is accomplishing his holy purposes; is carrying into effect his wise and good designs in a manner agreeing to the different natures of each, and in accordance with those laws which he has himself appointed. In the language of Scripture, he is "working all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. i. 2). "He is doing according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. iv. 35).

To the view of providence which has been given, as reaching to the hearts and actions of men, it will be objected, that it is inconsistent with human freedom. But to this we reply, that, so far from being inconsistent with human freedom, it goes to *sustain* and *secure* it. God has made men free agents; and, by his providence, he preserves and controls them in the exercise of a free responsible agency. Suppose his providence over them were to be suspended or to cease: Would they be free agents? Would they exist at all? It is not enough, therefore, to say that God's universal providence is not inconsistent with the free agency of man. It is that which supports him in the exercise of freedom. It is that which gives effect to those laws of his being, without which, if he could exist at all, he would not be in circumstances to exercise his faculties, and form a character as a free, moral, accountable agent.

It will be further objected, that the view we have taken makes God *the author of sin*. But how the author of sin? Not the

actor of it; not the perpetrator, the responsible agent. This is, in every case, the sinner. It merely follows, from what has been said, that the transgressor sins, and sin takes place, under the providential government of God,—that government which is sustained and executed by his power, and guided by his wisdom and goodness. If any think that this is making God the author of sin, we cannot help it. We cannot avoid the imputation by dethroning him. It is no more disparagement to the Divine Being, however, to be in this sense the author of sin (though we detest the phrase), than to be the author of bugs, and toads, and reptiles.

It is objected still further to the doctrine here advocated, that it represents God, not only as the universal cause, but the *only* cause, and differs very little, if at all, from pantheism. But this, surely, is said without due consideration, and without so much as the semblance of truth. What is pantheism? Pantheism, it is well known, has put on different phases, and has been variously represented by its advocates. But as much as this may be said, in the general: Pantheism makes everything God, and God everything. It acknowledges no God aside from nature. It makes no distinction between God and what are commonly called his works. It denies the existence of a literal, personal deity; making God a *personification*, and not a person, —a figure of speech, and not a reality. In short, it is but another name for atheism. And, surely, the views which have been exhibited in this Lecture have no connection or affinity with sentiments such as these. We represent God as a *literal being*, a *person;* and as possessing all the qualities and attributes of a person. We represent him as essentially distinct from the created universe,—those beings and worlds which he has made, which he preserves, and over which he reigns. We consider him, indeed, as the great *first cause*, and, in some sense, the *universal cause;* not to the exclusion of inferior causes, but as originating, guiding, and controlling all. He has given existence to myriads of intelligent minds, each of which is a being by itself, a free, moral agent; not a part of God, but under the government of God, and amenable to his judgment bar. But it is needless to waste words in showing that the doctrine of God's

universal providence is not pantheism, or anything allied to it. Scarcely any two doctrines can be conceived of more entirely distinct and opposed to each other than these.

The doctrine of providence, as here explained, should be regarded as a *most desirable one*. It is desirable, in comparison not only with cold and cheerless atheism, but with those forms of deism which represent God as standing aloof from the world he had made, and not concerning himself with it, except in directing some of the more important events. It is desirable, too, in comparison with those forms of Christian doctrine which give to God the government only of the natural world, leaving the hearts and characters of men to be reached by him but indirectly, if at all. The devout mind loves to see God in everything; as not only shining in the sun, and whispering in the breeze, but roaring in the storm and the tempest. It loves to regard all creatures and events as subject, in some way, to his providential control, and all the changes which are taking place, however individuals may be affected by them, as flowing from his all-wise counsel, his heart, and his hand.

The views of providence which have been exhibited are not only desirable, but of *great importance*. They are important *theologically*. It is impossible to frame a consistent scheme of theology, and more especially of Calvinistic theology, without incorporating into it, as a first principle, the doctrine of God's universal providence. For what is Calvinistic theology? How much is involved in it? What does it teach? It teaches, among other things, the eternal and universal purposes and foreknowledge of God. But how are these universal purposes to be fulfilled, but by a universal providence? God's providence must be co-extensive with his plans, or the latter will be liable to continual defeat. It is also among the teachings of Calvinism, that all who shall finally be saved were chosen in Christ Jesus before the world began; that in the fulness of time they were renewed by the Holy Spirit; that being renewed, they are kept by the mighty power of God; that they are justified, progressively sanctified, and brought at length to heaven. Or, to express it all, in the language of an apostle: "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son;

and whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. viii. 29, 30). But does not this long chain of glorious truth, reaching from eternity to eternity, and every successive link of it, imply that God's control over the hearts of men is complete and absolute; that he can renew them, and sanctify them, and keep them, and save them, and yet they be left to think, feel, choose, and act, with perfect, unembarrassed freedom? Does it not necessarily imply that he can "work in them to will and to do of his own good pleasure," while they "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling"?

In short, Calvinism, like the Bible, throws sinful men completely into the hands of God to dispose of them and all their concerns, both for this life and that which is to come, according to his pleasure; implying, obviously and necessarily, that God rules the moral world as well as the natural, and that his providence, like his purposes, is strictly universal. Those who reject this great doctrine may call themselves Orthodox and Calvinists, if they will; but their Calvinism can be little more than nominal. It must be a heterogeneous, patchwork Calvinism, which will not bear examination here; much less the searching scrutiny of Heaven.

The doctrine which has been considered is of great importance *practically*, as well as theologically. It lies at the foundation of some of the holiest, sweetest exercises of the Christian's heart. It furnishes the only proper ground for the exercise of *gratitude* in the reception of favors. Deny the universal providence of God, and to whom shall we be grateful for the blessings of life? They may not have come from God. They may be of our own procuring. Or we may have received them from friends, who, of course, are entitled to all our gratitude. But if the providence of God is particular and universal, then we may know *always* from whom our blessings come. For, come in what manner or in what channels they may, — whether with or without the intervention of human instrumentality, — we know that they are the gifts of God, and that to him we should render the tribute of a grateful heart. Whoever else may be entitled to our

thanks, we should never forget that unwearied Benefactor who is the author and giver of all our mercies.

Again: the view of providence which we have taken furnishes the only ground of *submission* under trials. Reject the universal providence of God, and who can tell to whom the multiform ills of life are to be traced? They may be the result of chance, or fate, or of our own follies. Or they may have been inflicted, maliciously, by others. But when we look upon our afflictions as events in the righteous providence of God,—proceeding from his wisdom and goodness, his heart and his hand, we have every reason to bow and submit. And we have just as much reason for submission, so far as providence is concerned, when they come upon us through the medium of second causes, or through the agency of wicked men, as when they proceed directly from the hand of God. For second causes are all of them under the direction of the great first cause, and neither men nor devils can do aught against us without our Father. When we are afflicted through the agency of wicked men, we may be under no obligations to submit to *them*. We may rightfully blame them, and seek reparation at their hands. But we *are* under obligations to submit to that overruling providence, without which not a sparrow falls, and not a hair can be plucked from the head of any creature.

Again: the view which has been taken of the providence of God furnishes the only proper ground for cheerful *trust* and *confidence* in respect to the future. Take away this doctrine of providence, and what have we left in which to trust? We are out at sea, without rudder or compass, sun or sky. The world around us is a confused chaos, of which the wisest of creatures can discover neither ground nor reason, end nor aim. But give us back the universal, all-pervading providence of God, and we have no fears. We have One at the helm now who knows, under all circumstances, just what to do and how to do it. We have a Sovereign on the throne whom no artifice can cheat, whom no power can overcome; who will bring light out of all the darkness, and good out of all the evil in the world; who will cause even the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain. In such a Being it is the privilege

of the Christian, at all times, to trust; and trusting here, he may dismiss his fears, repress his anxieties, and quietly await the disposals of his Father's will.

I only add, that the subject of providence, in all its bearings and relations, is a *boundless subject*. A full exhibition of it, in respect to this world, would involve a complete history of the world, from its creation to its end. A full exhibition of it, in respect to the created universe, would involve an entire history of the universe. All I have attempted is to unfold some general principles, which may help to guide our meditations in pursuing a subject so vast, so overwhelming.

LECTURE XXII.

THE DESIGN OR END OF GOD IN HIS WORKS.

We have already considered the eternal purpose or plan of God, in which "he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." We have also considered his works of creation and providence, by which his eternal purposes are progressively executed. There remains yet another question connected with this subject: What is God *aiming at* in all his works? What is the *ultimate design* or *end* which he has in view? As it would be unreasonable to suppose God to have entered upon his vast works without a purpose or plan, so it would be unreasonable to regard him as working without an end. He must have had an *end in view;* and as he is infinite in wisdom and goodness, we must suppose this to have been the *best end*,— the one most worthy of himself.

In Scripture, God is represented as being himself, in some sense, the end of all his works. "Thou hast made all things *for thyself*" (Prov. xvi. 4). "Thou hast created all things, and for *thy pleasure* they are and were created" (Rev. iv. 11). "For whom, and through whom, and *to whom* are all things" (Rom. xi. 36). "*For whom* are all things, and by whom are all things" (Heb. ii. 10).

In these Scriptures, as I said, God is represented as being *himself*, in some sense, the end of all his works. They were made, they exist, they are controlled and governed, *for himself*.

And these teachings of the Bible are in strict accordance with the dictates of reason. In eternity, when God existed alone in the universe, for whom should he have planned and purposed, but himself? And besides; as he is infinitely the greatest and best of beings, he is altogether worthy to become an end to

himself; and to have made any other being, or all others,—considered as separate from himself,—the end of his works would have been to adopt an inferior end, in preference to one that was infinitely superior.

It has been held by the most respectable theologians, that *the glory of God* was the ultimate end of his works,—that he has made and controls all things for the advancement of his own glory. But what are we to understand by this phraseology? In what sense can the glory of God be advanced?

There are two senses in which we may speak of the glory of God; viz., his *essential* glory, and his *declarative* glory. The essential glory of God is the glory of being *just what he is*,—of possessing all those attributes and perfections which crown his existence and constitute him God. By the declarative glory of God, is meant the *manifestation* of these perfections,—the illustration and exhibition of them to the view of others.

The question now arises: Can anything be added to God's *essential* glory? Was he not infinitely wise and holy, glorious and happy, before the worlds were made? And more than this he could not be, subsequent to their creation. Is it possible that the essential glory of God should be increased? We do not suppose, indeed, that the purposes and works of God have added anything to his essential glory. His glory, in this sense, cannot be increased. And yet we hold that the purposes and works of God have an indispensable connection with his essential glory. Did not infinite wisdom and goodness require (so to speak) of the Supreme Being that, in eternity, he should form just such a plan or purpose as he did form? If then he had not formed it, could he have been infinitely wise and good? And having formed his plan, did not infinite wisdom and goodness require that he should proceed and execute it? Was it not the dictate of infinite wisdom and goodness that he should commence the work of creation just when he did, and carry it on as widely and variously as he has done, and execute, in all respects, the plan he had formed? Suppose, then, that he had not done this; or that he had not done it all; could he have been infinitely wise and good?

I make these remarks for the purpose of showing, that

although the works of God do not literally add anything to his essential glory, they yet hold an indispensable connection with it,—so indispensable that, without his purposes and works, he could not have been infinitely wise and good.

But the phrase *glory of God*, as used in connection with this subject, has been generally understood in the other sense,—in the sense of his declarative glory. God has created the universe and filled it with intelligent creatures, that he might make himself *known* to them; that he might *display* before them his glorious attributes and perfections forever.

For God to glorify himself, in this sense, implies two things: First, that he should create intelligent beings, capable of knowing, loving, and adoring him. For if there were no beings in the universe to behold his glory, it would be vain to make an exhibition of it. To glorify himself would, in that case, be impossible. But, secondly, God must not only create intelligent beings, he must *reveal himself to them*. He must unfold to them the glories of his perfections and character. He must make them acquainted with himself. And he must do this, not in word only, but in *act*. It would not satisfy either himself or his creatures for him to tell them how great and wise and benevolent he was; he must illustrate and display his perfections in his works.

And this is what God has actually done, and is doing continually; and in so doing he is glorifying himself. He is promoting, advancing his declarative glory. It was this that the Psalmist had in mind when he said: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." "All thy works praise thee, and thy people shall bless thee."

God's works of creation and providence display his power, his wisdom, his general goodness, his glorious sovereignty; while his work of redemption displays his justice and his long-suffering grace. He has created vast multitudes of intelligent beings, in this world, and in other worlds; and, in his works, he is revealing himself to them. He is displaying and glorifying himself before them. That he might do this,—that he might

have the means and the opportunity of doing it,—was the great end, undoubtedly, for which the worlds were made.

Perhaps some may think that this is an end unworthy of God. But when we consider who the great Creator is, and in what relation he stands to the universe, we shall judge differently. For a poor dependent creature to desire display, would be vanity and sin. For such an one to plan and labor for himself, would be selfishness; because such an one is not worthy to become an end, even to himself. For such an one to love himself supremely, and labor only for himself, would be to bestow upon his little self a vastly disproportionate degree of attention and regard. But not so with God. As he is infinitely more worthy than all created beings, it is right that he should love himself more than all. To do this is not selfishness in God. It is rather a duty which he owes to himself. And to desire to display himself before his intelligent creatures, and make them acquainted with his perfections and glories, is not vanity in God; it is benevolence.

This will be still more evident from another consideration. To know, love, and enjoy God, in the highest degree of which creatures are capable, involves necessarily *their greatest good.* What can be better for them than this? What can more promote their holiness and happiness? But how is their highest good, in this sense, to be attained, unless God is pleased to display himself before them? It is, then, the highest *benevolence* in God that he should seek to gratify himself, and bless his creatures, in surrounding them forever with the refulgence of his glory.

And this helps to remove a difficulty, which some good men have felt, in regard to this subject. It has been thought by some that the ultimate end of God, in his works, was not so much his own glory as the highest possible good of the created universe. But it will be seen, on reflection, that these two ideas run together, and involve each other. They amount, in fact, to about the same thing.

It is demonstrable, from the divine perfections, that, in forming his eternal plans, and in proceeding to execute them, God must have looked to the highest possible good of the universe

as a whole, including himself and all his creatures. He was wise enough to perceive such a plan as this; he was good enough to prefer and adopt it. It results, therefore, from his very perfections, that it must have been perceived and adopted. And, in the final execution of this perfect plan, the greatest good of the whole will infallibly be secured.

By the greatest good of the whole, however, we do not mean the greatest good of each and every individual constituting that whole. The greatest good of the whole, taken collectively, and considered *as a whole*, may permit and require that the private good of certain individuals should be sacrificed; provided, always, that no *injustice* is done, — that such individuals receive only the due reward of their deeds. The greatest good of the universe, as a *whole*, may require, and undoubtedly will, that incorrigible transgressors shall be punished, as they deserve, forever. But the greatest good of the whole, *as a whole*, I think God, in eternity, must have purposed; and in the execution of his purposes, this great end will undoubtedly be accomplished.

And in doing this, will not the God of heaven glorify himself in the highest possible degree? A being of less perfection than God might glorify himself by doing all the good in his power. An earthly monarch might glorify himself by promoting, to the full extent of his ability, the happiness of his subjects. But suppose there are no limits to his ability. Suppose him infinite in all his perfections. In this case, how can he glorify himself, in the highest degree, without securing the highest possible good to his dominions? And how can he promote the highest possible good of his dominions, without glorifying himself in the highest degree?

Thus the highest glory of God, and the highest good of the universe, as a whole, are found, as I said, to run together. They mutually involve each other, and in fact amount to very nearly the same thing. Hence, embodying both forms of expression in our definition, we may say that the ultimate design of God in his works is, *to glorify himself in the highest possible degree in promoting the highest possible good of the universe.* Or, changing the order of the sentence, we may say: The ulti-

mate design of God in his works is *to promote the highest possible good of the universe as a whole, and thereby secure his own highest glory*. This great design God had in view from eternity. He has kept it constantly in view, and will do so forever. Whatever God has done, is doing, or will do, his design in all is to glorify himself in the highest degree, in promoting the best interests of that universe over which he reigns.

If this be true, then we may know, in the general, God's *designs* or *reasons*, in all his dealings with men. The dispensations of God are often dark and mysterious to us, in this world. "Clouds and darkness are round about him." The particular ends which he has in view, or reasons which influence him, we cannot understand. But if what has been said is true, we need never be at a loss as to his great and ultimate end. We may always know what this is. On the large scale, in the most general sense, he is so ordering events always (however we may be affected by them) as to glorify himself in the highest degree, and promote the best good of the whole intelligent system. This is the end at which he constantly aims, and dark, trying, afflictive events are but *means* to this end. They are *necessary* means,—each one a link in that endless chain, which is running surely, infallibly, on to the most glorious results. How ought this consideration to soothe and comfort the afflicted people of God in seasons of deep darkness, and when smarting under a Father's rod. If they know not the particular reasons why they are afflicted, they may understand the general one. And this one is most desirable and glorious,—enough to satisfy them for the present, while they wait in patience and confidence for further revelations of their Father's will.

And what has been said of the divine dispensations, in this world, may be extended to the next. We may know the great end or design which God has in view in all his treatment of creatures there. Most persons would say, perhaps, that God will be glorified in the salvation of all the saved; but will he not also be glorified in the destruction of all the lost? If he made Paul for his own glory, and the highest good of the universe, did he not also make Judas Iscariot for the same end? And will not the case of Judas be overruled for this end as

surely as that of Paul? Judas is eternally lost to *himself*. "Good were it for that man if he had never been born." But Judas is not lost to God, or lost to the universe. God will be glorified in him, and the universe will be benefited by his example of suffering, and by his destiny forever. "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious" (Is. xliv. 5). Sinners may rage against God, may break his laws, and ruin themselves; but they can never defeat one of his purposes, or tarnish his glory in the slightest degree.

The views which have been taken of this great subject are of importance, in order that we may judge aright of the truths and the dispensations of God. If the last end of God in his works were (as some suppose) the highest happiness of his creatures, or of that portion of them which we see around us here; if *their happiness* had been the centre and end of all his aims; this world, certainly, had been a very different place from what we find it, and the Bible had been a very different book. It is impossible to account for the revelations of God's word, or the facts of his providence, on such a theory as this, or to reconcile them with such an end. But if (as the Scriptures assure us) "God hath made all things for himself"; if he is himself the centre and end of all his works; if his own highest glory (involving, as it does, the best good of the universe) is the grand object at which he aims; then, though there may be mystery in his word and in his providence, there is no absurdity, no contradiction between them. God may permit the existence of sin and suffering, in this world and in the future world; and it may be necessary to his great purpose that he should. God may, in this view, be a sovereign. He *will* be a sovereign. And he will secure, not arbitrarily, but in his own wisest way, and by his own wisest means, the great object and end which he has in view.

Again; the views which have been presented give us the most exalted conceptions of the glory and blessedness of the Supreme Being. The character of any being will depend essentially on what is to him the great object of life,—the *end* which he desires to accomplish. If this is a good and worthy end, his character will be good; but if the opposite, his character will

be bad. Now we have seen that the great end which God has before him in all his works is the noblest possible, — the most worthy and excellent that can be conceived. His own highest glory! The greatest possible good of the whole intelligent system! What can be better or more desirable than this! What a lustre does it shed on the whole character of God, that he has proposed to himself such an end! How happy must he be in the contemplation of it, and in seeing all events rolling on, conspiring together in his providence, for its complete accomplishment!

I only add: If God is glorifying himself in all his works, then his creatures ought, in all things, to seek his glory. In view of the principles which have been laid down, the requisition seems perfectly reasonable: "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." "Wherefore, glorify God, in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

LECTURE XXIII.

GOD THE SUPREME DISPOSER, AND A MORAL GOVERNOR.

In my last Lecture, I spoke of the glory of God as the great object and end of all his works. In all that he does, in all that he ever will do, the prime object of the Supreme Being is to exhibit himself, to display his perfections, to show forth his glory; so that his intelligent creatures may have the means of knowing, loving, and enjoying him in the highest degree of which they are capable, — which involves their highest good.

In displaying his glory to the view of creatures, God necessarily exhibits himself in different aspects and lights. He represents himself as discharging different offices and works. Viewed in one aspect, we behold his power, in another his wisdom, in another his goodness and his truth. In fulfilling one office, he displays his glorious sovereignty; in another, his glorious justice and grace. In these ways God makes a more full exhibition of himself than would otherwise be possible. He glorifies himself in the highest degree.

Among the offices which the great God fulfils, and in the fulfilling of which he shows forth his glory, are those of *Supreme Disposer* and *Moral Governor*. I adverted to these offices in my Lecture on Divine Providence; but their great importance requires that the distinction between them be still further illustrated and applied.

In different parts of the Bible, God speaks, and is spoken of, in each of these offices and works. "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things" (Is. xlv. 6, 7). Again, in a parallel passage: "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from

ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Is. xlvi. 9, 10). "He is of one mind, and none can turn him, and whatsoever his soul desireth, even that he doeth" (Job. xxiii. 13). "He doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. iv. 35). "Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another to dishonor?" "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Rom. ix. 15, 21). "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. i. 11).

In these and the like passages, God speaks, and is spoken of, in the high character of Supreme and Sovereign Disposer. It was in this office of Supreme Disposer that he, in eternity, formed the plan of all his future operations. It was a boundless plan, extending through all space and time, and to all contingencies and events. It was an infinitely perfect plan, requiring no change, admitting of no improvement or alterations. At the appointed season, and in fulfilment of his eternal purpose, God brought the worlds into existence; some higher and some lower; some material and some spiritual; some nearer the great source and centre of being, and some at remoter distances from it. He upholds in existence the worlds he has made; he moves them in regular order, according to established laws; he has filled them with living creatures of different orders and species, from the highest angel to the meanest worm; he preserves and disposes of all things according to his pleasure. Not a planet rolls or an angel flies, but by his power; not a hair is plucked or a sparrow falls without his notice. Not a human being is born or dies, is prospered or afflicted, is saved or destroyed, but his hand is, in some way, concerned in it all.

The affairs of communities and nations, as well as of individuals, are all subject to his providential control. He builds up, or plucks down, as seemeth good in his sight. He often dashes the guilty nations one against another, and makes them the instruments of their own destruction. "God hath spoken in his holiness: I will rejoice; I will divide Shechem, and mete out the

valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver; Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; Philistia, triumph thou because of me" (Ps. lx. 6, 8). Even those events which are brought about by human agency are not exempt from God's providential control. "Man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps." "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is from the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 9, 33).

Thus God is not only the original contriver and creator, but he is the Supreme Disposer of all things; and the devout mind loves to regard him in this light. He loves to see God exalted high above all contingencies; beyond the reach of all his foes. He delights to look up and behold him, rolling along the great wheel of his providence in its appointed course; bringing light out of darkness and good out of evil, and overruling all things, however they may seem to us at present, for his own highest glory and the greatest good. It is under impressions such as these that the believing heart exclaims: "Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens, and thy glory above all the earth." "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

Such is God, *the Supreme Disposer*. Let us now turn and contemplate him in that other aspect of which I spoke; viz., as *Moral Governor*. The moral government of God is that government of *law*, which he exercises over intelligent and moral beings. In kind, it resembles human governments; and, like them, is administered by laws and motives, rewards and punishments. It differs essentially from that sovereign *disposal* of things of which we have spoken. That is altogether in the hands of God, and men have naught to do with it, except to submit and rejoice in it. But in the moral government of God men have a deep and active concern. They are themselves the responsible subjects of this government. Its motives are addressed to them. Its laws bind them. If obedient, they are entitled to its promised rewards; if disobedient, to its just punishments. As Supreme Disposer, God orders all the circumstances and events of our lives according to his pleasure; while, as Moral

Governor, he makes known to us his will, and presses upon us, with the authority of a sovereign and the affection of a father, our obligations to obey.

The moral government of God implies several things. First of all, it implies (what is true) that he has surrounded himself with the proper *subjects* of a moral government; or, in other words, that he has given existence to intelligent beings,—free, moral, responsible agents, who are legitimately subject to him, and bound to obey him.

This government further implies (what is true) that God has given to his intelligent creatures a perfectly holy and righteous *law*, to be the rule of their conduct. He has not only enacted such a law, but published it. He has told his creatures what their duty is, and what they must do to enjoy his favor.

God's perfect moral government also implies, that his law—which is holy, just, and good—be *firmly sustained* and *righteously administered*. Nothing must be done, or suffered to be done, to tarnish the honor of the law, or detract from its authority, or weaken the obligations of creatures to obey. God must reward the obedient, and punish the disobedient, and each according to the measure of his deserts; so that all may see that the government is administered in perfect holiness, justice, and truth.

Or if, in any case, the disobedient are saved from punishment, this must be done upon grounds that will *satisfy justice* and *fully sustain the authority of law*. If forgiving mercy is exercised towards transgressors, then some expedient of mercy must be provided by which all the ends of law and government shall be as fully secured as in the infliction of the threatened penalty. If such an expedient can be provided, then a righteous moral governor, may, if he pleases, and on such terms as he pleases, extend forgiveness to the transgressor; because, by the supposition, forgiveness, under such circumstances, does no dishonor to the law.

This last remark is of the more importance to *us*, since, under the moral government of God, such an expedient of mercy has actually been provided in behalf of sinful men. I refer to *the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ*,—the grand expedient of

God's grace,—on the ground of which, and of which alone, human beings can be saved. We have all rebelled against that holy government under which it is our privilege to live. We have broken the law of God, incurred its penalty, and justice demands that the penalty be executed. But the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, has consented to die for us. He has borne our sins in his own body on the tree. He has thus magnified the broken law, and made it honorable. He has vindicated the authority and satisfied the justice of the Supreme Ruler, and laid a foundation on which fallen, guilty, ruined sinners may be pardoned and saved.

This great work of atonement, it will be perceived, stands in immediate connection with the *moral government* of God. Under a government of physical agencies it would not be needed, and could not be applied. But under a perfect government of law which has been trangressed, an atonement *is* needed, and must be applied, or the transgressor must himself suffer the due reward of his deeds.

On the ground of the atonement which Christ has made, God may, as a righteous Moral Governor, offer pardon to sinners, on the simple condition of repentance and faith; and such an offer he has actually made, and is making, in the gospel. "Return to me, and I will return to you." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

And on the ground of the atonement, God may not only make such offers to sinful men, but he may earnestly *desire*, and he does, that men would accept them. He may use all proper motives with them to bring them to an acceptance. He may invite, entreat, and warn and urge. In the fulness of his heart he may exclaim: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!" "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?"

Such language would not become the Divine Being, as a

Supreme Disposer, who was doing "according to his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth"; who was "working all things after the counsel of his own will." But it does become him as a Moral Governor, who, at an infinite expense, has opened a way for the pardon and salvation of lost men, and who is graciously calling them back to their duty.

The distinction between Supreme Disposer and Moral Governor may be illustrated by another distinction, referred to in my Lecture on Divine Decrees; viz., that between the *purposes* of God and *his law*. This distinction, we then said, is a very obvious one, and of great importance in theology. But it is no more obvious or important than that we are here considering; for it is part and parcel of the same thing. The eternal purposes of God belong to him as Supreme Disposer. They constitute the boundless and perfect plan, according to which all the movements of his hand are conducted. "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." But the law of God pertains to his office and work as Moral Governor. It is the rule of conduct which he has prescribed to his creatures, and which he is bound, as Moral Governor, to enforce. Heaven and earth may sooner pass away than that one jot or tittle of the law should fail.

The distinction here set forth between God's office and work as Supreme Disposer and as Moral Governor, is one of great importance, *theologically* and *practically*. It helps to harmonize some seemingly discrepant representations of Scripture, and to remove some formidable theological difficulties. In many Scriptures, some of which have been already quoted, God is represented as sitting on the circuit of the heavens, having all hearts in his hand, and all creatures and events under his sovereign control. "He is of one mind, and none can turn him, and whatsoever his soul desireth, even that he doeth." "His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure." But, in another class of passages, he seems to use a very different language. He represents himself as earnestly desiring the conversion and salvation of men, even of those who are not saved. "How shall I give you up, Ephraim! How shall I deliver you, Israel!" "O that thou hadst hearkened unto my command-

ments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." "O that thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thine eyes."

Passages of this description are very numerous in the Bible; and how are they to be reconciled with those other Scriptures which have been quoted? If God so earnestly desires the salvation of all men, why are not all saved? If he doeth whatsoever his soul desireth, why does he not gratify his benevolent desires, in bringing all men to the knowledge of the truth?

This difficulty, which has been a perplexing one to ministers and others, can best be obviated, as it seems to me, by recurring to the important distinction here indicated,—that between the Divine offices of Supreme Disposer and Moral Governor. God's purposes, which belong to him as Supreme Disposer, are never crossed. In respect to these, he says of himself, and says truly: "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." And it is truly said of him: "Whatsoever his soul desireth, even that he doeth." But God's moral law is a very different thing; and it will not follow, because his counsel, his purpose, his great plan of providence is not defeated, that his law is never broken. Nor will it follow, because God, as Supreme Disposer, does all his pleasure, that as a benevolent Moral Governor he may not desire, and that, too, with an earnestness of which we can form no conception, the salvation of the multitudes who are never saved. As Supreme Disposer, God moves in one sphere, — fulfils one office, — performs one class of divine operations; while as Moral Governor he moves in another sphere, — fills another office, — presents another aspect of character, — performs quite another kind of work. In both he glorifies himself, but does it in very different ways. As Supreme Disposer, God holds a language perfectly true, and altogether befitting him in that high and sovereign capacity; while as Moral Governor he uses another language, not inconsistent with the former, equally true, and equally becoming to him, in the capacity in which he now speaks.

In administering a moral government over his intelligent offspring, God *desires* their obedience. He desires the obedience

of them all. And when any of them have wandered from him, he earnestly desires their return. At an infinite expense, he has opened a way in which they *may* return; and he calls out to them, and cries after them, to turn their feet backward to the paths of life. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he turn from his wicked ways and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" Such language is altogether befitting the Divine Being, as a benevolent Moral Governor,—administering a government of law over, not only intelligent creatures, but *apostate* creatures, for whom a provision of mercy has been made; but not at all befitting him as the sovereign and supreme Disposer, who doeth according to his will in heaven and on earth,—who "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

Let it not be said that the course of reasoning here employed implies that there are *two Gods.* It is the *one God* of whom we speak, presenting himself before us in different offices and lights, and performing different works; thus displaying himself more adequately and truly, and shining upon us in the refulgence of his glory.

Nor let any one think to refute our reasoning, by comparisons drawn from mere earthly relations, as of a father to his children, or of a ruler to his subjects. The truth is, no earthly relations can reach the vastness of the subject in hand. An earthly parent may stand in the relation of moral governor, in a small way, to the children under his care. He may give them laws, and desire and exact obedience. But can he stand to them in that other and higher relation of *Creator* and *Supreme Disposer?* Can he address them in language appropriate to such a relation? Or is it as important for him, and as difficult, as it is for God, to exhibit himself adequately to his children; thereby creating a necessity for different forms of manifestation, —for different offices and works? I make these remarks for the purpose of showing how dangerous it is to attempt illustrating (except to a little way) divine things by human things; or to attempt refuting the plain declarations of God's Word, by comparisons drawn from mere human relations.

It is of great importance for the creatures of God to regard him, and believe in him, in both the aspects which have been presented, since otherwise they cannot get a just and adequate *view* of him. They cannot see him or love him as he is. The same is also important, since both the views which have been given have high *practical* bearings, and are indispensable to the formation of a complete and well-proportioned Christian character. We must regard our God in the capacity of Sovereign and Supreme Disposer, in order that we gain the most exalted conceptions of him, and may repose and rejoice in him, under all circumstances. There are times when we want to look up to God as a Sovereign, sitting on the circuit of the heavens, and rolling into effect his undisturbed decrees,—bringing light out of darkness and good out of evil, and causing the wrath of man to contribute to his praise. There are times when, if we could not take these high, these ennobling views of God, we should have no ground of hope or comfort left.

At the same time, we love to regard the Almighty as a righteous Moral Governor, our most beneficent ruler, our heavenly Father, who has given us the best of laws, and whose government over us is perfectly wise and good. Especially do we love to regard him in the dispensations of his *grace*,—opening a way of recovery for the lost, and calling out to his wandering children to turn unto him and live. Without these views of God, we might adore and fear before him, but we could not love him as we now may. We could never be melted, as we now should be, in the ever warming, enlivening beams of his tenderness and love.

The Christian world affords numerous examples of the danger of taking but *partial* views of God,—of entertaining a *one-sided view of his character*. To say nothing of those who so represent the sovereignty of God, as to cut off entirely the free agency of man; or of those, on the other hand, who so exalt the human will, as to leave God no certain control over the hearts of his creatures; there are undoubtedly *pious persons*, *sincere Christians*, whose characters suffer, on account of the partial, one-sided views which they are led to take of the Supreme Being. Here, we will suppose, is a class of religion-

ists, pious persons, who dwell almost exclusively upon the sovereignty of God. They love to think of his wise purposes, his sovereign decrees. They rejoice that "the counsel of the Lord standeth forever, and the thought of his heart to all generations"; that "he is one mind, and none can turn him, and whatsoever his soul desireth even that he doeth." The effect of dwelling upon these and the like topics is, to form a particular type of Christian character,—trustful, stable, and for the most part joyful; but yet hard, rigid, wanting in tenderness and gentleness, sometimes in conscientiousness, and in a wakeful, active concern for the good of souls. Persons of this character may be induced to leave to the sovereignty of God what they ought to be using means to accomplish themselves.

There is another class of Christians who, owing to wrong instructions, or prejudice, or some other cause, think little of the sovereignty of God in his purposes and in redemption. They do not rightly understand the subject; they are afraid of it. As it presents itself to their mind, they feel no complacency in it. They prefer to dwell on another class of subjects;—the goodness of God, more especially as manifested in the gospel; the love of Christ, in consenting to come into the world and die for sinners; the freeness, the universality of the gospel offers; the various motives of the gospel, and the obligations of men everywhere to embrace it. Now the dwelling so constantly on topics of this nature, to the exclusion of others, goes to form a particular type of Christian character, and a very different one from that last exhibited. These men will be earnest and active, at least at times. Their love, their zeal, will rise very high. But they will be fitful, unstable, blown about by the gusts of feeling or the force of circumstances, like a ship without anchor, ballast, or helm. They need those high views of the sovereignty of God to which they have never yet attained, to moor them; to sustain them; to give them confidence in seasons of darkness, as well as of light; to lead them to adore and fear God, as well as love him; in short, to give symmetry and proportion to their Christian characters, and form them in a meetness for heaven.

The two classes of persons here referred to are supposed, both of them, to be truly pious; and the characters of both are formed (as every person's must be) according to the views which they respectively entertain. And the characters of both are one-sided, out of proportion, just because they have been led to take but partial, one-sided views of God. We must habitually think of God, not only as Supreme Disposer, but as Moral Governor; not only in the steady march of his glorious sovereignty, but in his tender love for dying men. We must think of him in his *whole character*, as he has revealed himself in the Scriptures; and then, if we are Christians, we shall *love* him in his whole character; our hearts will be formed into his whole image; and we shall become meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

As the two aspects in which we have been led to view the divine character are very distinct, so the duties resulting from them are distinct also. We are to adore and fear, in view of the divine sovereignty. We are to submit to it, and rejoice in it. We are to stay ourselves upon it at all times, and we shall not be greatly moved.

But as active beings, free moral agents, bound to avoid the evil and choose the good, and to *do good* to the utmost of our ability, we have to do with God chiefly as a Moral Governor. His holy law is binding upon us. Under all circumstances, this is to be the rule of our life. With his sovereign purposes, we have, in this view, nothing to do. They are, in the general, unknown to us; and so far as they are known, they are not, like the law, a rule of conduct. We have indeed broken the divine law, and incurred its fearful penalty; but as a kind, paternal Moral Governor, God is unwilling to give us up. He has opened a way of recovery for us, and in all the benignity of his infinite heart, he is crying after us to be wise. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Our first and immediate duty is to listen and comply. Tenderly invited to come, we *must* come, and receive, with a full heart, the salvation of the gospel.

And having this salvation ourselves, we must do all in our

power to impart it to others. We must not trust to the divine sovereignty to accomplish what it belongs to us instrumentally to perform. Paul was a firm believer in the sovereignty of God; yet who ever burned with a more ardent desire, or labored with a more untiring assiduity for the salvation of souls? Happy he who takes the same views of the divine character as the Apostle Paul, and forms his character after the same model.

LECTURE XXIV.

THE HUMAN MIND.

In several of our last Lectures, we have treated directly of God. We have inquired into the mysterious *mode* of the divine existence,—a trinity in unity, three persons in one God. We have discussed the *purposes* of God,—that boundless, providential plan, stretching from eternity to eternity, and extending to all events, little and great, whether in the natural or the moral world. We have considered some of *the works* of God, by which his eternal purpose is executed; particularly his works of creation and providence. We have looked into the ultimate *design* or *end* of God in his works,—his own highest glory, and the greatest possible good of the intelligent universe, as a whole.

We might now proceed, at once, to a consideration of God's work of *redemption*, by which another portion of his great plan is executed; but, previous to this, it will be necessary to inquire into the nature, the capacities, the character, the condition of that portion of God's creatures who are to be redeemed. In prosecuting this inquiry we turn, for the time, from God to *man*. We turn from *theology*, in the stricter sense of the term, to a consideration of *anthropology*.

Man is a complex being, made up of two distinct and perfectly dissimilar substances; a material and corruptible body, and an immaterial, incorruptible, and immortal soul. These two parts of the man are mysteriously and most intimately united in this life. They are so united that each exerts a powerful influence on the other; the soul affecting the body, and the body the soul. Of the body, we shall have little occasion

now to speak. Our principal concern is with *the mind*,—*the soul*.

A moment's reflection will satisfy any one that the subject of the human mind, and that of religion, run very near to each other. They so intermingle, *run together*, that it is impossible correctly to understand the latter without some right conceptions of the former. For example: an important doctrine of evangelical religion is that of *depravity*. But what is depravity? And where is it? It belongs, obviously, to the mind; its seat is in the mind; and how can it be rightly understood without some knowledge of the human mind? And so of the doctrine of *regeneration*. Regeneration is a change in the mind,—a deep and radical change; and how shall we understand the nature of it, and be able satisfactorily to explain it, without a right understanding of the mind itself? And so of the difficult subject of *moral agency*. This, with all its varied connections and influences, pertains directly to the mind; and in vain shall we endeavor to understand it, without a correct mental philosophy. In our religious discussions, we have much to say about *sin* and *holiness*. But both these have their seat in the mind. The influences of the Spirit, too, are exerted upon the mind. And all those graces and virtues, which are the fruits of the Spirit, and which go to constitute the Christian character, belong to the mind. Indeed, both the salvation of the gospel, and the destruction from which it delivers, attach chiefly, though not exclusively, to the human mind.

These remarks are intended to show the very intimate connection between the religion of the Bible and the mind of man, and the necessity of a correct knowledge of mind in order to a right understanding of the gospel.

The human mind may be considered under four several departments; viz., the *sensational*, the *intellectual*, the *emotional*, and the *voluntary*.

Our sensations are the impressions made upon our minds, through the external organs of sense. In these we are entirely passive. When the external organ is in a healthy state, and is approached through its appropriate medium, sensation will be produced, whether we will or not.

Sensation has sometimes been confounded, though improperly, with external perception. It is *through* our sensations, or *by means of them*, that the intellect perceives external things. Sensation is intimately connected with perception, though distinct from it.

Our sensations have also been confounded with our emotions or feelings; but this cannot be true. Our sensations and consequent external perceptions often excite emotion,—strong emotion; but the sensation itself is not emotion. What can be more different than the sensation of sight, and the feelings awakened by what we see; or than the sensation of hearing, and the feelings excited within us by what we hear?

Our sensations lie nearest of all our mental affections to the outer world. They are those which are first awakened by the outer world, and through which all our knowledge of that world is obtained.

The second great department of mind is that denominated the *understanding* or *intellect*. This is the power which perceives, thinks, judges, remembers, imagines, reasons. It has to do primarily and chiefly with our *ideas* and *thoughts*. It is by the understanding or intellect that ideas are first received. It is here that they are retained, recalled, considered, associated, and compared.

Our ideas, as to their origin, are of two classes,—*external* and *internal*. They may all be traced either to the world without us, or the world within. With the former class, we become acquainted through the *external senses;* with the latter by *consciousness*. In other words, we are conscious of them.

Our first, our earliest ideas, are chiefly of external origin. As soon as we are ushered into life, our senses begin to make us acquainted with external objects. And children, at the first, are chiefly interested in such things. They are little more than creatures of sense. The same is true also of savages, and of persons who are but partially civilized and educated. Tell them stories; talk to them of occurrences in the outer world; and you have no difficulty in gaining their attention. But turn to what passes in their own minds,—their processes of thought, their states of feeling, the character of their internal exercises

and affections,—and you have entered a region where they will have little ability or inclination to follow you.

We have the power, not only to acquire ideas, external and internal, but also to *recall* them, or *receive them back* into the mind, when they are gone from it. Both these powers belong to the intellect. The former is commonly called *perception*, the latter, *conception*. This power of *conception*,—the power of recalling or receiving back ideas which have before been in the mind, is one of vast importance to us. It is one of the utmost necessity, and of far-reaching influence. Without it, it would be impossible to remember, to reason, or to exercise the imagination; for what are commonly called memory and imagination are nothing more than the power of conception, modified by other mental exercises and states. The remembrance of a thing is but the conception of it as something known to be past; and a fancy sketch—a work of the imagination—is but a train of conceptions associated, not according to fact, but by the fancy of its author.

This power of conception is not directly under the control of the will. We cannot recall an idea at pleasure. And yet the will has an indirect control over it. When an idea is suggested, or comes into the mind, according to the established laws of mental association, we may hold it, and dwell upon it; and among the several ideas suggested by it, we may select this or that, and so direct the train of our thoughts almost at pleasure.

In this indirect control over the thoughts, our personal responsibilities, in no small measure, consist. The commencement of moral influence upon us, good or bad, is precisely here. A good thought is suggested to our minds, it may be by some pious friend, or some guardian angel, or by the Holy Spirit. This now may be cherished, or repelled. If cherished, it may lead to other kindred thoughts, and these to others, till the affections become interested and the heart is changed. But if the good thought be repelled, the mind is left empty, swept and garnished, for some sinful intruder to come in and find a lodgment.

It is in the thoughts that temptation always commences. Some seducing object is presented, or some tempting thought is thrust into the mind. If this is treated as our Saviour treated

his temptations; if it is instantly resisted and repelled, it leaves behind it no taint of sin. But if the seducing thought is harbored and indulged, it will lead on to others, and these to others, till the whole mind is corrupted, and the character, it may be, ruined. A good thought is a treasure of inestimable value. It is an angel of mercy, and should be received and treated as such. But an evil thought is a fiery dart of the adversary, which should be resisted and repelled, as we would the intrusion of the old serpent himself.

Besides perception and conception, there is another intellectual power of great importance to us: I mean the power of perceiving *relations*,—commonly called *judgment*. When we see, or think of, two or more objects, we are capable of comparing them, and of discovering a variety of relations between them. One, it may be, is longer than the other, or shorter, greater or smaller, whiter or blacker, colder or hotter, or more or less beautiful. Or we may discover the relations of resemblance or difference, of fitness or unfitness, of proportion or disproportion, or that of cause and effect. There is no end to the relations subsisting between external objects, and also between our internal ideas. The faculty by which we perceive these relations is called *judgment;* and it is one of vast importance to us. It enters into those mental processes commonly called *abstraction* and *generalization*. It enters into every process of *reasoning*, and without it we could not reason at all.

The connection of this power of perceiving relations with reasoning, is very obvious, and may be easily explained. The perception of a relation is a *judgment*, and the expression of the judgment in words is a *proposition*. Thus I perceive between two objects the relation of resemblance, which perception is a judgment. I express the judgment in a proposition, when I say: "These two objects are alike."

Now, a process of reasoning is the putting together of propositions in such a way, as to present a relation which, at first view, was not obvious. Or it is so to put together propositions as, from a truth already known, to educe one which before was not known. Such is reasoning. The whole process is made up of propositions; and every proposition is but the expression of

a judgment. This shows the indispensable connection between reason and judgment. Without the faculty of judgment,—the faculty of perceiving relations,—it would be impossible to reason at all.

But I must not dwell longer on the *intellectual* department of the human mind. To explain it fully would be to write a treatise on intellectual philosophy; which is no part of my present plan.

We pass to the third great department of mind,—the *emotional*, the *sensibilities*. By some writers, this whole region of mind is ignored, or rather is confounded with the will. They make all our mental exercises to be either intellectual or voluntary, referring the entire range of the sensibilities to the will. But this, obviously, is an imperfect classification, and has been a source of error to all who have adopted it. Our emotions and feelings, though closely connected with the will, are clearly not of a voluntary character.

Among our sentient feelings may be classed, in the first place, the *appetites*, such as hunger, thirst, etc. These are feelings in the mind, occasioned by particular states of the body. We are not directly voluntary in them, though we are capable of restraining and controlling them. They constitute powerful motives to action, but are not, in themselves, of a moral nature.

Next to the appetites may be classed the *natural affections*, such as pity and parental love. These, like the appetites, are powerful motives to action, and require to be regulated and controlled; but they are not of the nature of moral action, and in themselves possess no moral character.

There is also a class of feelings sometimes called *muscular;* and a still larger class, which are closely connected with the *nervous system*. These nervous affections not unfrequently assume a religious aspect; and under the influence of them, persons are led either to rejoice in hope, or tremble with apprehension, or sink in the blackness of despair. Still, there may be nothing in them of a truly religious nature, and they are not to be depended on as affording decisive evidence of character, one way or the other.

Among the sentient feelings may be classed the various emo-

tions and passions; such as surprise, astonishment, wonder; the emotions of beauty, grandeur, and sublimity; sorrow, joy, grief, fear, and also anger. These are all feelings in the mind, awakened by the presence of appropriate ideas or objects.

We also include among the sentient feelings a class of instinctive *desires* and *aversions*, such as the universal desire of knowledge and of happiness, and aversion to misery. A portion of our desires and aversions belong to the voluntary part of man; but this is not the case with those to which I have referred. They are manifestly instinctive and sentient.

There is also the feeling of moral approbation and of obligation; the feeling of satisfaction in doing right, and of remorse when we do wrong. These feelings belong to the conscience; and a question arises, on which it will be necessary to pause a moment,— *What is conscience?* Is it a simple faculty, or does it involve a complex mental operation? Does it belong to the intellect, or to the sensibilities, or to both?

In popular language, it may be well to speak of conscience as a distinct faculty; but in reality it is not so. It involves a complex mental operation. It is to be referred to two distinct departments of the mind. One part of the office of what is popularly called conscience is *intellectual*. It is a perception, a *judgment*, as to the moral quality, the fitness or unfitness, the right or the wrong of actions. Another part of the office of conscience belongs, obviously, to the *sensibilities*. It is a *feeling*,—a feeling of obligation to do whatever is perceived to be right; a feeling of approbation or remorse, according as we have done right or wrong.

In speaking of conscience, we sometimes refer to the one part of it, and sometimes to the other. The phrases, *enlightened* conscience, and *misguided* conscience, have reference to it as intellectual; while the expressions, a *seared* conscience, a *tender* conscience, refer to the sensibilities.

We sometimes see these different parts of conscience existing in very different degrees of perfection. We see a conscience that is enlightened, but not tender; or a conscience that is tender and quick to feel, but not greatly enlightened.

These different parts of conscience require, also, very different

kinds of cultivation. The intellectual conscience, like everything else pertaining to the intellect, requires to be instructed and enlightened. The sentient conscience requires to be cherished, yielded to, and habitually obeyed. To resist it, and do violence to it, is to sear and stupefy it.

The emotional, the sentient region of mind may be regarded as lying between the intellect and will, and as sustaining important relations to both. In approaching our fellow-men with a view to exert an influence upon them, we first address ourselves to their *intellectual* nature. We address them through the senses, and convey ideas to their minds. If these ideas or thoughts are of an interesting character, they will awaken *emotion*, *feeling* of some kind, and thus bring us in contact with the sensibilities. The process of influence may stop here. It may not be of a nature to proceed further. But if the ideas imparted are of a nature to excite the will, the process of influence will not stop. The awakened emotions, in connection with the ideas or objects which have awakened them, will operate as motives to the will, and voluntary action will be the result.

Such is the natural and direct process of moral influence;—*by means* of the intellect, *through* the sensibilities, *upon* the will. It is not likely that the intellect ever exerts any influence upon the will, except through the medium of the sensibilities; so that, as Professor Upham says: "Strike out the sensibilities, and you excavate a gulf of separation between the intellect and will, which is forever impassable."

But though the *direct* process of moral influence is such as has been described, this is not the only influence of which we are the subjects. While the direct process of influence is going on, a *reflex* influence is often exerted in precisely the opposite direction. The sensibilities affect the intellect as well as the intellect the sensibilities, and while the will is influenced by both, it sends back a reflex influence upon both. Every one knows how much his thoughts and feelings are under the control of his will, and how ready men are to believe what they wish to believe.

This whole sentient region of mind is worthy of deep attention and study, and that for two reasons.

1. It has a most intimate connection with the subject of *motives*. God governs the moral world by motives. Physical force is out of the question here. Men are not moved about, like inert masses, or lifeless machines, but appropriate motives are presented, in view of which the will is gained.

The motives which influence the will are of two kinds, *external* and *internal*, or, more properly, *intellectual* and *sentient*. The former class includes all such external objects and events, such truths and considerations, as have a tendency to influence the will. The latter class all lie in the sentient region of the mind, and include the feelings generally. And what gives the more importance to this latter class of motives is, that it is only *through them*, as I have said, that the intellectual motives operate. The intellectual or external motives move the sensibilities, and through them move the will; and never otherwise. It is on this account that the same external motives operate so differently upon different persons. The state of the feelings, of the internal motives, is different. It is on this account that depraved and vicious men often act so strangely; resisting what are intrinsically, and ought to be, the strongest external motives, and falling before temptations which ought not to have with them the slightest influence. External motives do not reach the will, except through the sensibilities; and the appetites, the passions, the deranged and depraved sensibilities of the persons in question are in such a state that none but base and unworthy motives can influence them at all.

2. The sensibilities are worthy of attention and study on account of their connection with the *religious experience and character*. In consequence of ignorance and error on this point, Christians often mistake their real characters. Sometimes they give themselves credit for more religion than they have, and sometimes for less. They have joys and ecstasies, or anxieties and depressions, on which they lay much stress one way or the other, which are chiefly sentient, and on which very little dependence can be placed.

Sinners, too, often deceive themselves in the same way. They build their hopes upon a religion which is purely sentient, and

which, like the morning cloud, or summer brook, soon passes away.

But I cannot dwell upon this subject further. I here dismiss the sensibilities, and shall proceed, in my next Lecture, to speak of the fourth great department of mind, the *voluntary—the will.*

LECTURE XXV.

THE WILL.

We come now to treat of the fourth great department of the human mind,—*the will*. The will, obviously, is a distinct faculty of mind; and so it has been considered by nearly all who have written on the subject. Its operations are simple, uncompounded, and clearly distinguishable from those of every other power. A volition, a preference, a choice, an exercise of will, is not a thought, an idea, a perception, or conception. Neither is it an emotion, a passion, a mere feeling of any kind. It is clearly a mental operation by itself, and marks the will as a distinct power or faculty of the soul.

And not only is the will a distinct faculty of mind, it is also a very important faculty. This will be evident from two considerations. First, the will is the great *moving*, *acting* power of the soul. And secondly, it lies at the foundation of *moral character*. Without the will, we might *perceive* different objects; we might *feel* in view of them; but we could never obey or disobey any divine command. We could never *do* anything, good or evil.

The exercises of the will have been considered under two classes: the *executive* or *imperative*, and the *internal*. The former class are those which stand directly connected with overt actions,—the movement of the tongue, the hand, or some of the bodily members. The latter class includes all those voluntary exercises which do not appear directly in overt action. But this classification, though it may be complete, covering the whole ground of the subject, is not sufficiently definite for our present purpose. Our *internal* exercises of will, instead of being classed together, as above, may more properly be considered under

several divisions. In speaking of the different classes of our voluntary exercises, however, it must be kept in mind, that though specifically different, they are generically similar, and are all to be referred to the same great faculty, the will.

The first class of voluntary exercises, and by far the most numerous class, consists of our *simple choices* or *volitions*,—the same as those above referred to under the name of *executive* or *imperative* exercises. They stand immediately connected, as I said, with overt action,—the movement of some of the voluntary muscles. The nature of the connection between these motions of the will and the corresponding motions of the body, is indeed inscrutable to us. We may say that the muscle moves the limb, and the nerve excites the muscle, and the will the nerve. But *how* does the will excite the nerve? How does the immaterial act on the material? Who can tell? The *fact* of this connection is certain; but the *manner* of it is past our finding out.

That our simple choices, or executive volitions, are immensely numerous, there can be no doubt. Every word we speak, every limb we move, every external action we perform, implies a previous volition or choice. We will to raise the hand, and it rises. We will to open our lips and speak, and it is done. And so of every other voluntary movement of the body. These simple choices are rapid in their succession, and short in their duration. Each fixes upon something requiring immediately to be done; and with the doing of it, or the attempt to do it, the volition passes away, to be succeeded by others.

Our *internal* voluntary exercises are chiefly of a more permanent character. When put forth, they remain upon the mind, often, for a considerable time. The mind is permanently influenced by them, and, so long as they are retained, receives a character from them. These internal exercises may be divided into several classes.

The first class I shall notice are our *purposes*. A purpose embraces a plan or course of conduct, more or less general, and requires often a vast number of simple choices to carry it into effect. An individual purposes to go a journey. He forms the purpose deliberately and of choice. He is as voluntary in it as

he can be in anything; and the purpose, the plan itself, is one. But how many steps must be taken, and how many simple choices, or executive volitions, must be put forth, in order to bring him to his journey's end?

Our purposes are often so general as to include under them, not only a multitude of simple choices, but several distinct *subordinate purposes.* For example: a young man forms the purpose to become a preacher of the gospel, and to pursue a course of study preparatory to that important work. But as he revolves the subject, he perceives that a great many subordinate purposes must be formed, in order to carry this greater and more general one into effect. He must go to school here or there. He must enter this or that college, and this or that seminary, and must resort to various plans and labors, in order to procure the means of support. Very likely, in the course of his preparatory studies, he repeatedly changes some of these subordinate plans, while the more general purpose to qualify himself to become a preacher of the gospel remains the same.

Another class of our internal voluntary exercises consists of our *resolutions.* A resolution does not differ materially from a purpose, except that it does not often reach so far, and is more peremptorily fixed and expressed. It is a *fixed determination* to do some particular thing, or to attempt the doing of it, at some future time. Thus I resolve to perform some particular act to-morrow, and something else the next week, and something else the next year. These resolutions are deliberately formed,—formed in view of motives, and are exercises of the will. Still, they differ materially from those executive choices by which they are carried into effect.

A third class of our voluntary exercises consists of our *intentions* or *motives;* using the word motive in the voluntary sense.[1] An intention or motive (in this sense of the word motive) is a choice, a purpose, to bring about a particular end, by means of some overt act or actions. Thus, we frequently ask, when we see an outward act performed, "What was the *motive* of him

[1] There are three classes of motives, as the word is used: the *intellectual* and the *sentient*, which have been explained, and also the *voluntary*. The voluntary motive is synonymous with intention. It does not, like the other two classes, *move the will*, but is an internal exercise of the will *moving to outward action.*

who performed it? What was his *intention?*" That we are voluntary in our intentions is evident from the nature of them. They partake of the nature of a purpose or choice. The same is further evident, since to the intention, and to this alone, attaches the entire moral character of the external action growing out of it. What is the overt act, the mere motion or motions of the body, when separated from the intention from which the action sprung? "Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard to kiss him." How seemingly kind and affectionate was all this! Yet Joab's intention was to murder Amasa,—which bloody intent he carried into effect (2 Sam. xx. 9, 10).

Still another class of our voluntary exercises consists of our *desires* or *wishes*. The term desire is an ambiguous one, being sometimes used to denote feelings which are merely sentient. Thus the appetites and the natural affections are not unfrequently called desires. There are also *universal, instinctive desires;* as the desire of knowledge and the desire of happiness. But that in the larger part of those exercises which are commonly called *desires* or *wishes*, we are voluntary, there can be no doubt. The thief deems it possible to obtain a sum of money by stealth; he earnestly desires to obtain it; he resolves that, if possible, he will obtain it; and he enters on a course of measures accordingly. Now it would be difficult to show that the thief was not as voluntary and as criminal, in his desires, as in his subsequent resolutions and endeavors. Indeed, may not the foundation of all his guilt be traced to the indulgence of these guilty desires? David Brainerd conceived it possible, by much sacrifice and toil, to bring the American Indians, or a portion of them, to a knowledge of the truth. He earnestly desired the accomplishment of this object; he resolved that he would attempt its accomplishment; he formed his plans, and entered on a course of measures accordingly. Now was there nothing morally excellent and holy in these benevolent desires of Brainerd? And was he not as voluntary in them, as in those resolves and efforts by means of which his desires were accomplished?

Our desires, in the sense in which we here use the term, are in reality *choices*, *preferences*, and differ from our simple choices,

chiefly, in respect to their objects. Their objects are not *immediately attainable.* If they were so, the desires would become simple volitions, fastening upon the chosen objects, and securing them at once. But as these objects are not immediately attainable, what would otherwise be volitions assume the form of *abiding wishes* or *desires*, to secure the objects in question as soon as practicable. Wrong desire, in the voluntary sense of the term, is precisely what is forbidden in the tenth commandment.

Doubtless there are other voluntary exercises, which come not under either of the classes that have been mentioned. Such are those religious exercises which are made the subject of direct command in the Scriptures. Some of these are purely voluntary; others are but partially so. But into all, the voluntary element more or less enters. All are, to a greater or less extent, under the control of the will. Among those religious exercises which are purely voluntary, are submission to God; a choosing of God for our portion; a consecrating of ourselves to his service; a willingness to be in his hands, and at his disposal forever. Exercises such as these are, perhaps, purely voluntary. They are clearly exercises of the will.

Other enjoined religious exercises are complex in their character, and require to be examined with a closer scrutiny. Thus *faith*, in the larger sense of the term, includes an intellectual perception and reception of some truth, together with a voluntary surrender of the soul to its influence; or, which is the same, a *feeling*, *living*, *and acting* as though it were true. Also *repentance*, in the fullest acceptation of the term, is a complex affection, implying conviction of sin, which is chiefly intellectual; sorrow for sin, which is sentient; and a turning away from sin, which is voluntary. In a more restricted sense, the voluntary part of repentance, the *turning from sin*, may be said to include the whole of it. The Apostle Paul uses the term in this sense, when he says: "Godly sorrow *worketh* repentance unto salvation."

Love, considered as a religious affection, is used in three senses. There is the love of benevolence, the love of complacence, and the love of gratitude. The first of these kinds of

love—a *wishing well* to all beings—is chiefly, if not wholly, voluntary. The love of complacence is complex; involving not only benevolence towards its object, but a feeling of delight in that object. The love of gratitude is still more complex; involving not only benevolence towards its object, and a feeling of delight in it (*i. e.* if it is a worthy object), but also a feeling of obligation, and a desire to make some returns. It will be seen, that into all these forms of love the voluntary principle enters. Were it not so,—were the affections purely sentient,—there would be no more holiness in them than there is in the fondness of animals for their young, or the attachment of the turtle to his mate.

We are commanded to "rejoice in the Lord, always." We are also to "rejoice with those that rejoice, and to weep with those that weep." The feelings here enjoined are chiefly sentient; and yet the sensibilities are so much a matter of cultivation, and in so many ways subject to the direction and control of the will, that the injunctions are to be regarded as entirely proper.

Indeed, we are to regard all those affections which are made the subjects of command or prohibition in the Scriptures, as partaking more or less of a voluntary character. They are not all purely voluntary, as we have seen; but the voluntary element enters more or less into them. They are directly or indirectly under the influence and control of the will. Can we conceive that God should enjoin anything upon his creatures, in which they were not, in some sense, voluntary; or that he should command them to put forth exercises over which they had no active control? He may command us, and he does, to cultivate our understandings, to control our thoughts, and to form our opinions in accordance with his truth; because in all this, the will is more or less concerned. But so far as the understanding is beyond the reach of the will, we find no injunctions laid upon it. And the same remark may be extended to our sentient feelings. They are the subjects of command or prohibition, just so far as they are under the direction of the will, and no farther.

In the foregoing remarks, I have spoken of the will as a distinct and highly important faculty of the soul. I have attempted

a classification and description of our voluntary exercises; in doing which, I have been led to speak of many of our *religious* exercises, which partake more or less of a voluntary character.

We come now to contemplate the will in another point of light; viz., its *subjection to law*. That this faculty of the soul, like all the rest, has its laws, might be inferred from *analogy*. If the laws of our mental constitution extend to the sensational, intellectual, and emotional parts of our nature, as they certainly do, why might we not expect that they would reach also to the will? Why should not this last great department of the soul need the direction, and feel the restraints of mental law, as much as either of the others?

That the human will is subject to law, is further evident from the daily conduct of men. The actions of men are not the sport of mere casualty, of chance. They result, ordinarily, from settled principles, and are characterized by a great degree of uniformity. It is on this account that we can calculate beforehand, with so much certainty, how men, in particular circumstances, will act. It is on this one fact—the subjection of the will to law—that political science, and indeed all science touching the future conduct of men, is based.

But, without stopping further to establish the fact in question, I proceed, directly, to show what are some of the laws of the human will.

1. The first I shall mention is that great law—extending to all created beings and things—of *dependence upon God*, and *subjection to his providential control*. Some have claimed a sort of independence for the human will, and have reasoned about it as though it were independent. But how is such a theory possible? Is not the will of man, like everything else pertaining to him, a creation of God? Did he not originally bestow it, with all the powers which it possesses? And does he not uphold it every moment? Could it subsist or act at all, but by his sustaining, directing hand? God could no more impart independence to the human will, than he could self-existence, or a past eternal existence,—strict independence being one of his own incommunicable attributes.

Besides, if the wills of men are out of the hands of God, then

how does he exercise that providential control over the moral world, which was ascribed to him in a previous Lecture? How does he fulfil his purposes, his predictions, his promises? How does he convert sinners, and sanctify believers, and hear and answer the prayers of his people? And how are the hearts of men in the hand of the Lord, to turn them whithersoever he will? But the case is too plain for argument. There can be no doubt that the human will, like every other created thing, is dependent upon God, and subject to his providential control.

2. The human will, like all other created things, is subject to the great law of *cause and effect*. While it is constantly operating as a cause, it is itself an effect, and all its changes and exercises are effects. Some have insisted that our volitions are without cause. They hold this to be the distinction between passive motion and voluntary action,—that while the former is caused, the latter is uncaused. But if our volitions are uncaused, then they are either self-existent and eternal, or they are mere casualties, accidents, without any rule or law, beyond control, and not to be accounted for on any principles whatever, —both which suppositions we know to be unfounded.

There are two points of difference between voluntary action and passive motion, without reverting to the strange supposition that the former has no cause at all. In the first place, our voluntary exercises are the motions of *a will*,—a power inherently active,—a power altogether *sui generis;* whereas, passive motion is the movement of something besides a will. Then, secondly, these actions of the will are caused, as nothing else is, by *reasons*, *motives*, moral *considerations*, and not by the application of physical force. Physical force could never move a will, nor can moral considerations move anything else. We might as well think to move a house by moral means, as to move a free, active, responsible will, by the application of force.

The causes of our voluntary exercises are appropriately called *motives;* and, as remarked in my last Lecture, they are of two kinds,—the *external*, *intellectual*, or *objective;* and the *internal*, the *sentient*, or *subjective*. External motives comprise the whole range of ideas and objects,—everything in the understanding

which is of a nature to excite the sensibilities, and through them the will. Sentient motives include all those feelings which go to move and influence the will. As remarked before, the former class of motives seems never to reach the will but through the latter. The external motive being modified by the internal, they come down upon the will with a united influence.

3. With these preliminaries, I come to another law of the will,—which, indeed, is not another, but only a different expression of the last; viz., that *every exercise of the will must have a motive.* To suppose the contrary would be absurd and impossible. Unless we can conceive of a choice, without anything chosen, or any reason or inducement for its being chosen, we cannot so much as conceive of an exercise of the will without a motive. Such a phenomenon would be more than a miracle; it would be a natural impossibility. Every exercise of will must necessarily have some object on which it terminates, and some reason or inducement under the influence of which it is put forth. In other words, it must have a motive.

4. A fourth law of the will, and one which will require a more full consideration, is, that *the will is always as the strongest motive.* We do not mean by this, that the will always yields to that external, objective motive which is *intrinsically* the strongest, and which ought to have the greatest weight; for this would imply that men always act right, and do their duty. But a variety of causes may contribute to present the worse as the better reason, and make that motive, for the time, appear the strongest which is not so in reality. The state of the sensibilities, too, may be such, that an external motive which, intrinsically, is very weak, and ought to be spurned at as of no account, may excite interest, awaken feeling, and ultimately carry away the will. The law on this subject is, that the will is always as the *predominant* motive,—as that which, at the time, appears the strongest, or which strikes the mind with the greatest force.

In one respect, however, this law of the will is unlike the last. To suppose an exercise of will without any motive, involves, as I said, a natural impossibility. But to suppose the will to yield to the weaker motive against the stronger, involves no natural impossibility. It is what *may* be done. It is what,

in innumerable instances,—in every case of actual sinning,—*ought* to be done. And yet we suppose *it never is done.* Whether we do right or wrong, we freely, actively follow the lead of those motives which, at the time, are to us the strongest, or which strike the mind with the greatest force.

In proof of this, I appeal first of all to *consciousness.* In all our actions we are conscious of being influenced by motives, and that the degree of influence is in proportion to the strength of motives. A certain amount of motive will lead us to *think* of a proposed measure, or course of action. Additional motives will lead us to think of it seriously. A still farther increase of motives may lead us to adopt it.

We are sometimes in situations where the motives before us are so nearly equal, that we hesitate, and are in doubt what course to pursue. And we all know how a slight inducement, coming up on one side or the other, at such times, will be sufficient to turn the scale. Now we are not to infer, from facts and illustrations such as these, that we are machines, turned about mechanically by weights and pulleys; but that we are moral beings, influenced by reasons or motives, and that we are proportionally more influenced by those motives which are to us strong and impelling, than by those which strike us with less power.

That the will is always as the strongest motive, and that mankind universally are convinced of this, is evident from the manner in which they attempt to influence and direct the actions one of another. This is done invariably by the presentation of motives; and their hope of success (other things being equal) is always in proportion to the strength of motives which they are able to exhibit. Thus a parent, wishing to direct the actions of a reluctant child into a particular channel, sets before it the *reasonableness* of the thing proposed. If this is not sufficient, he shows the child how much is to be *gained* by acquiescence. If the child still refuses, the parent appeals to its sense of *obligation*, and urges this as a motive to obedience. And if nothing else will suffice, he threatens to inflict deserved punishment. In this instance, we see the parent proceeding in a regular course, from motive to motive, till at length the will of the child

is gained. And the parent need be no philosopher, in order to understand and accomplish this, and to do it effectually.

The whole system of rewards and punishments, both in human governments and the divine, is in accordance with the doctrine here advocated. On any other principle, why should a rich reward and a severe punishment have greater influence than those of a trifling nature? Why does the magistrate offer a reward of thousands, rather than of tens, for the apprehension of the murderer? And why is murder punishable with death, rather than with bonds?

It is because men act regularly from the strongest motive, that we are able to predict, with so much assurance, how, in particular circumstances, they will act. The farmer presumes with as much certainty that the best grain, at the lowest price, will meet with the most purchasers, as that the sun will shine to warm and fertilize his fields. And he reckons upon the labor of individuals in his employ (especially if he has tried them, and knows their characters) with as much confidence as he does upon the utensils they employ in the execution of their work. Still, such individuals move not by compulsion or constraint. They act freely and voluntarily in yielding to the influence of motives, and fulfilling the expectations of their employer.

We always expect our fellow-men to act from the stronger motive; and when we see them appearing to act otherwise, we conclude, either that they have motives of which we are ignorant, or that they are insane, and of course not responsible. So, in all probability, the Egyptians judged of Moses, when he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. So the Jewish rulers judged of Paul, when he forsook their company, and joined the followers of the crucified Nazarene. And so the world judge of the most disinterested and engaged Christians now. They know not how to appreciate the real motives of such Christians, and they sometimes think them literally deranged, acting either from no motive, or from the weaker in opposition to the stronger; and sometimes, that they have motives which are not avowed, such as worldly gain, ambition, or a desire of applause.

We may regard it, then, as a law of our moral nature that

—with the explanations and limitations above given,—the will is always as the strongest motive. It yields to that motive which at the time appears the strongest, or which strikes the mind with the greatest force.

I know it has been said that the law, thus interpreted, amounts to nothing. It ends in the truism, that the will always is as it is, or that it yields to the motives to which it does yield. But, with due deference to high authorities, we must insist that the law means much more than this. There is an inherent difference in the strength of motives, both external and internal. Two dollars a day is a much stronger motive to the hired laborer than one. Two dollars a bushel is a much stronger inducement to the farmer to part with his grain, than one. And so of the sentient motives,—appetites, impulses, instinctive feelings, and desires,—some are much more powerful than others. Now the law is, not that the will yields to those motives to which it does yield, but that it follows the motives which, in the existing state of the individual mind, appear to it the strongest, which make the strongest impression upon it, or which strike it with the greatest force.

5. I mention but another law of the will. It is one which attaches to the very nature of the will, and without which there would be no will left. Whenever the will, or the agent, decides upon a particular course, he is conscious of what has been termed the *natural ability* to decide differently. Men do as they do, in yielding to the stronger motive, not from a natural necessity or from compulsion, but of their own free choice. They know that they are naturally able to do differently. In many cases, they feel that they ought to do differently. And yet, with the full consent of their hearts, they follow the lead of those motives which, at the time, are to them the strongest.

Perhaps some may think that we here set up the Arminian doctrine of *the power of contrary choice*. But this is a mistake. The power of contrary choice, in the sense in which some writers use the phrase, is not the abstract natural power to do differently from what we do,—a power which all men are conscious of possessing,—but a power of acting from the weaker motive against the stronger, which is *frequently exercised*, and

which *may be exercised* in spite of all that God can do to prevent it. It is an ignoring and contradicting of our fourth great law of the will. It is virtually taking the will out of the hands of God, and giving to it a sort of independent sovereignty. A power of contrary choice such as this, constitutes no part of our philosophy or theology; while the abstract natural power to do differently from what we do, seems to us to belong to the very nature of the will, and is to all men a matter of consciousness.

It will be said, no doubt, that the view we have taken of the subject in hand—this subjecting of the will to law, and placing it in the hands and under the providential control of the Supreme Being—is quite inconsistent with its freedom. If what has been said is true, moral freedom is gone forever. This objection will be considered in the following Lecture.

LECTURE XXVI.

THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

In my last Lecture I spoke of the will as a distinct and highly important faculty of the soul; attempted a classification and description of its various exercises; and considered some of the laws to which it is subject. I am now to treat of *the freedom of the will*. I shall endeavor to show how much is implied in it, and in what it consists.

The question before us, it will be remembered, is not that which was long agitated in the Christian world respecting what was called *the bondage of the will*. Augustine, Luther, and Calvin denied free-will, and advanced what they called the bondage of the will. They did not, however, deny a proper free-agency, or teach anything which they deemed inconsistent with it. The bondage of the will, for which they contended, was no other than that "bondage of corruption," spoken of by the Apostle Paul (Rom. viii. 21). And the free-will which they denied, and which their opponents advocated, was the opposite of this. In short, the question was one about the natural and entire depravity of the human heart;—a question resembling that on which we are to enter, in little else besides the terms.

It must be further remembered that the liberty about which we are to inquire is *internal liberty*,—the liberty of *choice*, and not a liberty of external action. We have liberty of external action, when there is no external hindrance or impediment to the execution of our wishes; when we can do as we choose, without compulsion or restraint. Internal liberty, or liberty of choice, is quite another matter.

It would be needless to examine all the theories which have been proposed in regard to this internal liberty, or all the

Christian doctrines which have been denounced, as being inconsistent with it. It may be well, however, to notice some of them.

1. It has been said, that the doctrine of *natural depravity*, or that there is, in the natural heart of man, a strong *bias* or *inclination to evil*, is inconsistent with human freedom. "If men are to be free, there must be no such bias or proneness to evil; there must be no strong controlling motives either way; the mind must be left in a state of indifferency." But who is not conscious, in his own experience, that this representation is not true? Who does not know that he acts as freely, and is altogether as responsible, when under the influence of motives so strong that they leave no room for hesitation, as when under the influence of weaker motives, or as when the mind is balancing between opposite courses, and hardly knows which of them to pursue? The Apostle Paul was strongly inclined to preach the gospel to the Gentiles,—so strongly, that a sort of necessity was laid upon him, and he said, "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel!" But was not Paul possessed of moral freedom while pursuing his missionary labors? Alexander the Great was under the influence of strong, impelling motives, in his endeavors to conquer and enslave the world. But was he not free in those endeavors? And will he not be held responsible to God, and to posterity, for all the sufferings and murders of which he was the guilty occasion? The blessed angels are under the influence of a strong, natural bias or propensity to hold fast their integrity, and persevere in holiness. Still, are they not free? Fallen angels have a propensity to sin, of the strength of which, perhaps not even fallen men can form any adequate conception. Still, are they not free? A state of perfect indifference, so far from being essential to moral freedom, seems to forbid the exercise of the will at all. How can a person prefer one thing before another, while he does not prefer it; or put forth an act of choice, while his mind is in a state of perfect indifferency?

2. It has been said, to the thousandth time, that the doctrines of God's universal *purposes* and *foreknowledge* are inconsistent with human freedom. "If our actions are to be free, there must be no foreknowledge, foreordination, or previous certainty in

regard to them. They must be left contingent. Contingency of action is essential to free agency; and what is contingent cannot be previously certain or foreknown." But however plausible this statement may appear in words, a moment's reflection will satisfy us that it has no foundation in truth. It is contradicted, in the first place, by every day's experience and observation. Knowing, as we do, the influence of motives, and the laws of our various mental operations, how often are we able to predict, with almost entire certainty, how, in particular circumstances, men will act. Yet we see them acting with as much freedom, as though there was no previous certainty or expectation in the case. For example, I have no more doubt (unless some physical obstruction shall intervene) that the Western mail will arrive in the city this evening than I have that it will be dark at midnight; and yet the postmasters, the carriers, and all concerned in its transportation, will act freely. I have no more doubt that those of our citizens who are not physically disabled, will go to their breakfasts to-morrow morning, than I have that the sun will rise in his season; and yet no one will be dragged to the table by an invincible fate, but all will go with the utmost freedom. If we could in no case be certain as to the future conduct of our fellow-men, then we could have no settled confidence one in another; for what is such confidence but an assurance that individuals, on whom we depend, will perform certain specified actions. But is it so, that the measure of confidence which prevails in society impairs the moral freedom of men, and that, if confidence were general and perfect, it would destroy such freedom?

But we may look at the argument in a still more convincing light. Who, that is not an atheist, can seriously doubt, that God does "see the end from the beginning," and that "known unto him are all his works from the foundation of the world"? Who can doubt that the Being, who has actually predicted so many distant future events, is perfectly acquainted with all such events, and could, if he pleased, infallibly predict them all? But if God *knows* all future actions and events, then it is certain, beforehand, that *they will take place*, and of course nothing future is properly contingent. Still, do not men act freely? Do they

not choose as they please, and do as they choose, and possess all that freedom that they can conceive of, or desire; while in every instance they act, as it was certain to the view of God they would act, from all eternity?

3. It has been often said, that if the will is governed by the strongest motive, then it cannot be free. But how is the will governed by the strongest motive? This matter was sufficiently explained, perhaps, in my last Lecture. Suffice it to say here, that motives, in no case, exert a physical, compulsory power over the will. This is not the mode of their operation; nor could a will be moved at all by such a kind of influence,—more than a house or a rock could be moved by persuasion. The will is an inherently active power; and in obeying the strongest motive, it freely, cordially, responsibly yields to it. It might decide differently; but it prefers to decide as it does. In short, to yield to the strongest motive, is to do as one *pleases;* for *pleasure*, as the term is here used, is but another name for the strongest motive, or for what Edwards calls "the greatest apparent good." Hence, if it is not inconsistent with freedom for men to do just as they please, then they are free in yielding to the strongest motive, or to that motive which, at the time, is the strongest to them.

4. It has been said, again, that the doctrine of God's controlling providence over the moral world is inconsistent with human freedom. "The will must act independently, in order to be free. It must, at least, originate its own volitions. To place it in the hands and under the control of God, is to destroy it as an active, responsible power." This objection has been before considered; but it may be well to look at it in another light. The will, it is said, must originate its own volitions. But how is this done, but by a previous volition; which, for the same reason, must have one previous to that; and so on *ad infinitum*, —involving the absurdity of a volition before the first?

When a voluntary exercise arises in our minds, there is a change in our minds; and this change, like every other, must have a cause. And now if we may not look without the will for the cause, if it must be sought in the will itself, what cause can be assigned, except that we chose because we *would* choose;

we acted because we *preferred* to act; we put forth an exercise of will because we *willed* to put it forth. Here, then, is an exercise of will originated by a previous exercise of will. And this previous exercise of will, according to the theory, must be originated in the same way, which runs us into the absurdity above noticed.

Or, if we look at the subject in another view, we have the same absurdity as before. If we originate our own exercises of will, it would seem we must do it either voluntarily or involuntarily. If we do it involuntarily, there is nothing gained, surely, on the score of freedom. There can be no freedom in an originating impulse of this kind, more than there is in the beating of the heart, or in the process of digestion. But if we originate our own exercises of will *voluntarily*, this is the same as saying that we originate one voluntary exercise by another,—the identical absurdity before exposed.

In proof of the self-originating power of the will, an appeal has sometimes been made to *consciousness*. We are all conscious, it is said, of possessing and exercising this power. We are conscious, certainly, of putting forth exercises of will, or of choosing and refusing, in view of motives, and under their influence. But does our consciousness extend any farther than this? Is any one conscious of choosing to choose, of willing to will, of originating one act of will by another? If so, I can only say that his consciousness reaches farther than mine.

It has been objected that the above argument against the self-originating power of the will, if it proves anything, proves too much. It proves that "no cause can act, but by first acting to produce that act,"—the absurdity of which would render all causation impossible. But I see not the force of this objection. The argument under consideration (which is that of Edwards) does not assume that *no* cause can act, or exert a causal influence, but by first acting to produce that act; but only that the human will cannot originate a volition, or do anything else, without willing. We say nothing here about natural, physical causes. But how a will can originate a volition, without willing to do it, is to me inconceivable. And if every act of the will

must be originated by a previous act, then the absurdity of Edwards is fully inaugurated.

An attempt has been made to discredit this argument by giving it a bad name,—"the *dictum necessitatis*." But here is no dictum necessitatis at all. There is nothing in it, or about it, which is inconsistent with the entirest freedom. Men may choose as they please, and do as they choose, without a self-originating power of the will,—without creating one exercise of will by another.

We have now examined several Christian truths, which have been thought to conflict with freedom of will, and have found that they have really no bearing on the subject. These truths may remain, and will remain; and yet men may possess all that freedom which they can conceive of or desire.

The question, then, returns upon us: What is implied in freedom of the will? In what does this attribute of our nature consist? Let us separate these questions, and show, first, what is *implied* in freedom of the will. This freedom implies (and that is about all we can say on the subject) the normal, healthful possession of all those faculties which are essential to moral agency;—more especially those of conscience and will. In other words, it implies a proper natural ability to choose and act as the subject pleases.

In answer to the second question, we say, that moral freedom consists in exercising the will one way, while conscious of the power to exercise it in some other way; or in preferring, choosing some one thing, while conscious of entire natural ability to choose some other thing. In other words, it consists in voluntarily yielding to the strongest motives, or in doing as *we please* while conscious that we could do differently. This is freedom. It is all the freedom that we need, or of which we can conceive; and this always exists where there are the human faculties, and more especially the faculty of will.

We resolve freedom, therefore, into the very nature of the will itself. Who ever saw, or heard, or can conceive, of a will not free? As well might we conceive of a ball that was not round, or a cube that was not square. Take roundness away from a ball, and it would not be a ball. Take squareness away

from a cube, and it would not be a cube. So take freedom, voluntariness, and consequent responsibility away from a will, and it would no longer be a will. It would be something else, —we know not what.

The question, therefore, so long mooted, whether the human will is free, is really no question at all. If man has a will, of course it is a free will; and if he has it in regular connection with the other human faculties, he is a free, moral, responsible agent.

The questions, too, whether the foreknowledge of God, or the purposes of God, or the control which he exercises over the moral world, destroy or impair human freedom, resolve themselves into this: Do all these things, or either of them, destroy or impair the will? Do they take it clean away, or do they sensibly embarrass it in its operations? If the human will is destroyed, why, then, freedom is gone. No doubt of it. Or if the will is essentially impaired or embarrassed, freedom is proportionally diminished. But if neither of these things can be truly said, if the will of man remains entire, if it operates in connection with the purposes and providence of God, normally and naturally, in view of motives, and under their influence, then we need give ourselves no more trouble about freedom and responsibility. We are as free as creatures can be, and are justly responsible for our actions.

In my last Lecture, I spoke of the necessity and the influence of motives, showing that every exercise of will must have a motive; and that, in the sense explained, the will is always as the strongest motive. The views there exhibited I deem of much importance to every minister of Christ, and indeed to every person who desires to exert an influence upon the conduct of his fellow-men. If the will were not under the influence of motives, and if the degree of influence exerted was not in proportion to the strength of the motives urged, then what propriety in using motives with men to persuade them to do their duty, or to do anything else, and in making these motives as impressive as possible? On this ground, poor preaching would be as likely to prevail as good preaching, and men would be as likely to be converted without preaching as with it. But

as mankind are constituted, ministers of the gospel have every encouragement for a skilful and powerful application of motives. There is just as much room for skill in adapting motives, and earnestness in enforcing them, as though everything depended on their instrumentality; as, indeed, under God, it does. To be sure, God is the grand moving power in the moral world, as in the natural; but then he operates in both by means, and in accordance with established laws; and this is one of the laws of mind, that the will is always as the strongest motive.

Let, then, the minister of Christ adapt his motives wisely, and urge them efficiently, and make them as impressive as possible, and he will be proportionally the more likely to be successful; not because he, by his eloquence, can convert or sanctify the soul, or because motives alone can do it, but because God works by motives in turning the hearts of sinners to himself, and it is an established law of his operation, that the stronger the motive, the more likely to prevail.

LECTURE XXVII.

NATURAL AND MORAL ABILITY, NECESSITY, ETC.

The principal object of this Lecture will be to show, that there is a real and valid distinction between what is called *natural and moral ability and inability*, and to illustrate the *nature* and *importance* of this distinction.

It is a mistake to suppose that this distinction originated with President Edwards and his followers, or that it is peculiar to New England. It is as old, for aught we know, as the creation; as old, certainly, as the use of words and the construction of sentences by the human race. We find it in all languages, ancient and modern. We find it in all books, and in reference to all subjects; so that those who are inclined to repudiate it, find it impossible to succeed. The *μη δυνάμαι* of the Greek, the *non possum* of the Latin, the *ne puis pas* of the French, and the little *cannot* of the English, are continually used in two different senses; the one expressing what is called a *moral*, the other a *natural* inability; the one a mere inability of disposition or will, the other an inability over which the will has no power. We ask a pious friend to lift for us a weight of five hundred pounds. He replies, "I cannot do it." We ask him to go with us to some place of amusement on the Sabbath. He replies again, "I cannot do it." In both cases, he pleads (and pleads properly, as terms are used) an inability. But who does not see that here are two kinds of inability? My friend has no natural power to lift the weight. He could not lift it, if he would. He has the natural power to comply with the other request, and lacks only the willing, consenting mind.

We ask a companion, who is with us in the fields, to leap to the top of a precipice, fifty feet high. He says, "I cannot."

But having clambered to the top, we ask him to leap down. He says again, "I cannot." His answer is the same in both cases. He is unable either to leap up or to leap down. But, clearly, the inability in the two cases is not of the same nature. My friend could not leap up the precipice if he would; but he might break his neck by leaping down, if he were so inclined.

The distinction here illustrated is that between natural and moral ability and inability. It is a distinction, as we said, which runs through all languages and all books. It occurs continually in common conversation. Not one of us passes a single day, unless we pass it in utter solitude, without repeatedly using the words *can* and *cannot* in the two senses above indicated.

We sometimes find this distinction in connections where we should hardly have expected it. Thus the late Dr. Witherspoon, in replying to the sinner's plea of inability, says: "O that you would but consider what sort of inability you are under, to keep the commandments of God! Is it *natural*, or is it *moral?* Is it a real want of ability, or is it only a want of will? Is it anything more than the depravity and corruption of your heart?" The Princeton Reviewers also say: "We readily admit that men have the natural faculties to obey God; or, in other words, that they are moral agents. And this is often what is meant by *natural ability*. We admit, also, that the inability of sinners is a *moral inability;* inasmuch as it relates to moral subjects, arises from moral causes, and is removed by a moral change."[1]

The distinction we are considering shows itself very often in the Bible; and that, too, in relation to a variety of subjects. In the following passages the inability spoken of is *natural:* "When Eli was laid down in his palace, and his eyes began to wax dim, that *he could not see*" (1 Sam. iii. 2). "The magicians did so with their enchantments, to bring forth lice; but *they could not*" (Ex. viii. 18). The men in the ship with Jonah "rowed hard to bring it to the land; but *they could not*" (Jon. i. 13). "I besought thy disciples to cast out the evil spirit, and *they could not*" (Luke ix. 40).

In the Scriptures which follow, an entirely different kind of inability is spoken of: Joseph's brethren "hated him, and *could*

[1] Witherspoon's Works, Vol. i. p. 215. Bib. Repertory, Vol. xiv. p. 432.

not speak peaceably unto him" (Gen. xxxvii. 4). "How *can* that which is unsavory be eaten without salt?" (Job. vi. 6). "We *cannot* but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts iv. 20). "I have married a wife, and therefore I *cannot* come" (Luke xiv. 20). In each of these cases there is no lack of *capacity*, of *natural power*. The inability is wholly of a moral nature,—the inability of will.

The two kinds of ability here spoken of are so distinct, that they often exist separate from each other. Persons are naturally able to do what they are morally unable to do; and again, they are morally able to do what they lack the natural ability to perform.

In establishing the *fact* of the distinction in question, we have indicated, to some extent, the nature and grounds of it. Natural ability has respect to the natural *capacity* or *faculties* of an individual. Moral ability has respect to the *disposition*, the *concurrent will*, or, which is the same, to the *predominant motive*, with which the will always coincides. We have the natural ability to do whatever is within the reach of our natural faculties and powers,—those with which the God of nature has endowed us. We have the moral ability to do whatsoever, under the influence of the predominant motive, we are disposed or willing to do.

Some writers, who admit the distinction between natural and moral ability, in respect to outward actions, doubt whether it can be applied to our internal exercises and affections. We are morally able to perform an outward act, when we are *disposed* to perform it. But this disposition is itself an internal moral exercise, and when are we morally able to put forth that? Will it be said, "When we are disposed to put it forth?" But this implies a disposition before the first, which is absurd.

The difficulty here arises from the ambiguities of that chameleon word *disposition*, and from confounding the different senses in which it is used. This word occurs in common conversation, and in our discussions on moral subjects, in the three following senses: 1. There is the *ulterior* disposition,—a state of mind, and not an exercise; a proclivity, preparation, or *disposition* (using the word in its most literal, etymological sense) for the performance of an action. In this sense, the disposition may

operate as a motive, but is not an exercise, and has not, in itself, any moral character. 2. There is the *sentient* disposition,—an emotion, a feeling, lying altogether in the region of the sensibilities; a motive to action, but not action, and possessing as before (except as far as it is yielded to) no moral character. 3. There is the *voluntary* disposition, which is an internal, voluntary affection, which has a moral character, which prompts to outward action, and in which the right or the wrong of the outward action entirely consists. Here, it will be seen, are three obviously different senses of the word *disposition*,—and the same may be said of the parallel word *inclination*,—and when these are confounded (as they frequently are) no wonder that confusion and error should be the consequence.

We say that a person is morally able to perform an outward action, when he is *disposed* to perform it; using the word in the third or voluntary sense. But when we say that a person is morally able to put forth some internal voluntary exercise when he is *disposed* to do it, we use the word in another sense. We refer now to the predominating motive, which constitutes a *disposition*, in one or both of the motive senses.

With the explanation here given, we see no more difficulty in applying the distinction between natural and moral ability to our internal exercises, than to overt actions. We have natural ability for the performance of both, when we have the requisite faculties, in a sane, healthy, working condition. We have moral ability for the performance of both, when we have the disposition to perform them; not using the word disposition, however, in both cases, in the same sense. The disposition moving to outward action is the *voluntary* disposition; while the disposition to put forth internal voluntary exercises is a *motive* disposition, made up of the state and feelings of the mind which go to influence the will. Keeping in view these different senses of the word, there is no absurdity in saying that there may be a disposition before the first. Before every voluntary disposition there will be, *must* be, a motive disposition, under the influence of which the former is awakened and brought into exercise.

It is demanded by those who deny natural ability, whether we mean to say that depraved man is able, *of himself*, to turn to

God and do his duty. Before answering this question, we must be permitted to ask how much is intended by it. If you mean to inquire whether man is able to do his duty *independently of God*, without the support of his hand, and the direction of his providence, we answer, no. In this sense, we can do nothing of ourselves. We cannot act at all, or subsist a moment. It is in God that "we live, and move, and have our being." But if you mean to ask, whether men are naturally able to do their duty, without the *special* aid and influences of the Holy Spirit, we answer, yes. The Holy Spirit is given, not to impart new natural ability, but new moral ability; not to bestow new natural faculties, but to stir up to new obedience,—to make us willing to exert the faculties we have, in the service, and for the glory of God. There is an important difference between God's general, providential influence and agency, and the special influences of the Holy Spirit. The former is exerted constantly, in all places, and at all times; the latter is conferred or withheld, according to the divine pleasure. Our need of the former lies in the fact that we are dependent creatures; our need of the latter, in the fact that we are sinners, estranged from God, and averse to duty. We *must* have the former, if we are to exist at all, or do anything, good or evil. We may exist without the latter, and be free, responsible agents; though it is certain that we shall never do our duty. The former kind of influence would be necessary for us if we had never sinned, or if Christ had never died for our sins; while the latter is the gift of sovereign mercy, flowing to us through a Redeemer.

It is objected to what has been called natural ability, that, if possessed at all, it must be a *useless, worthless endowment;* since, unless united with moral ability, or a moving, concurrent will, it accomplishes nothing in the way of action. It is admitted that mere natural ability, or faculties alone, accomplish nothing. Still, it does not follow that this kind of ability is of no importance. Are not faculties of body and mind important to us? What could we do, or how subsist as moral beings, without them? If mere natural ability accomplishes nothing in a way of action, it is certain that nothing can be done without it.

Besides, this kind of ability constitutes the ground and the

measure of the divine requirements, and of our obligations. We are bound to do, and God justly holds us responsible for doing, all the good which he has given us the natural ability, the capacity, to perform. We may not do this, or any part of it; but our neglect does not release us from the bonds of obligation. As God has given us our faculties, he may justly require us to exercise them all in his service. And this is all that he *can* justly require. Should he command us to exert powers which he had not given us; should he require us to love him with more than all our heart and soul and mind and strength, the requisition would be unreasonable.

Again, natural ability is essential to *free agency*, and the ground of it. We must have the power to choose, or refuse; to turn this way, that, or the other; to do differently from what we do; or how can we be said to act freely? It is in the possession and exercise of such a power, that free agency properly consists.

Thus far we have had to do chiefly with those who deny *natural* ability. There are those who would exclude moral ability and inability, at least from the nomenclature of theology. If the moral *cannot* is no other than a *will not*, then why not drop it altogether, and use *will not* in its stead?

To this we answer, first of all, that the *moral cannot* is found in all parts of the Bible; so that without recognizing the distinction between natural and moral inability, the Bible cannot be rightly interpreted or understood. Nor is this phraseology peculiar to the Bible. It is found, as we have said, in all languages and in all books. It occurs perpetually in common conversation, and in reference to all subjects. Hence, to exclude it altogether from theology would be to render the language of theology different, in this respect, from any other.

Besides, there is a propriety in this peculiar phraseology. This is evident from the general currency which it has obtained. It is also evident from the nature of the case. A moral inability is a real inability; very different in its nature from a natural inability, but not the less real. In every case of moral inability, though there may be the requisite faculties, there is

wanting the predominant motive, and the concurrent will, without which no action will be performed.

It should be further remarked, that the moral *cannot* is not altogether synonymous with *will not*. It expresses indisposition, aversion, unwillingness, with much greater emphasis and strength. It is sometimes said of sinners, that they *will not* come to Christ. But when their criminal aversion to Christ is to be set forth in all its energy, the moral *cannot* is used. "No man *can* come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." It would but feebly set forth the moral perfection of an angel, to say that he *will not* sin against God. We rather say, he *cannot*. It would be an equally inadequate use of terms to say of Satan, that he *will not* submit to God, and return to his duty. He *cannot*. Yet in both these cases the *cannot* is altogether of a moral nature.

We have the strongest use of the moral *cannot*, when it is applied, as it is in the Scriptures, to the Supreme Being. "Your new moons and solemn assemblies, I *cannot* away with" (Is. i. 13). "In hope of eternal life which God, that *cannot* lie, promised before the world began" (Tit. i. 2). "He abideth faithful; he *cannot* deny himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13). In each of these cases, the *cannot* expresses, not the want of natural ability, but the infinite *aversion* of the mind of God to everything that is wrong. It would confer no honor upon the Supreme Being, to deny his *natural* ability to do wrong. If he has no natural ability, or (which is the same) no faculties, no capacity to do wrong, he has none to do right, or to do anything of a moral nature. But we do honor God, when we deny his *moral* ability to do wrong; for this implies that, though naturally able as a moral agent, to do wrong, he never *will* do it; he is infinitely and immutably averse to it.

It is proposed, at this point, to pass from the subject of natural and moral ability, to consider another theological distinction very intimately connected with it. I mean that between *natural and moral necessity*. The want of *natural* ability to perform an action creates a *natural necessity* that it cannot be performed, however much we may desire it. The want of *moral* ability to perform an action creates no more than a *moral necessity*, or

previous *certainty*, that it *will not* be performed, although it might be, were we so disposed.

The difference between a natural and moral necessity may be thus defined. A natural necessity is one over which we have no natural power, — one which we cannot overcome if we will. A moral necessity we may overcome, if we will; though it is certain, at least to the mind of God, that we shall not. A natural necessity has respect to things physical, — to events in the natural world. A moral necessity has respect to the actions of free moral agents. A natural necessity secures the occurrence of an event, whether we will or not. A moral necessity secures its occurrence through our own free, responsible agency. A natural necessity, so far as it interferes with voluntary action, destroys freedom. But a moral necessity, so far from being inconsistent with free agency, the rather implies it. If an event is sure to take place at a given time, through the agency of my free will, then my will must be free, and I must be a free agent.

It is only on the ground of the distinction here set forth between a natural and a moral necessity, that it is possible to reconcile the absolute decrees and foreknowledge of God with human freedom. If the decrees of God touching the actions of men established a *natural* necessity in the case, then there could be no freedom. All would be fate. It would be impossible, on this ground, to reconcile the purposes of God and the free agency of man. But as the decrees of God respecting our actions establish only a *moral* necessity, or *previous certainty*, that when a particular act might be avoided, it *will be performed*, and that, too, in the exercise of our own free agency; here, obviously, is nothing inconsistent with freedom. Free agency, as before remarked, is the rather included.

And in this view, it has never seemed to me so very difficult to reconcile the purposes and foreknowledge of God with the freedom of man. Only recognize the distinctions between natural and moral ability and natural and moral necessity, and remember that it is a moral and not a natural necessity, which the divine purposes respecting our actions go to establish; and we shall have no difficulty in seeing that our freedom is rather

secured than impaired by these purposes. We are altogether as free in fulfilling God's great plan of providence respecting us, as though he had formed no such plan, and our actions were the merest contingencies.

The two kinds of necessity here spoken of, like the two kinds of ability, are frequently set forth in the Bible. The following are examples of a *natural* necessity, such as the individuals spoken of had no natural power to overcome. "The Lord said unto Moses, Behold thy days approach, that thou *must* die" (Deut. xxxi. 14). Jeremiah says of idols, "They *must needs* be borne, because they cannot go" (Jer. x. 5). "We *must* all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ" (2 Cor. v. 10).

Other passages may be cited as examples of a *moral* necessity. "It *must needs be* that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh" (Matt. xviii. 7). "When ye hear of wars, and rumors of wars, be not troubled; for such things *must needs be*" (Mark xiii. 7). "The Son of man *must be delivered* into the hands of sinful man" (Luke xxiv. 7). "All things *must be fulfilled*, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me" (Luke xxiv. 44).

I conclude with a few additional remarks on the importance of the distinctions which have been illustrated, more especially that between natural and moral ability. I have before said, that without a clear knowledge of this distinction, it is impossible that the Bible should be rightly understood, since the two kinds of ability are very often referred to in the Bible. It may be further added, that without a knowledge of this distinction, it is impossible that the condition of the impenitent sinner should be rightly understood. He is represented in Scripture as, in some sense, *unable* to come to Christ. But, how unable? If *naturally* unable, then he has a good excuse for not coming to Christ,—the same that he has for not lifting the mountains, or creating worlds. But if his inability is altogether an *aversion of will*, constituting a rooted indisposition to come to Christ, and obey the gospel, then he has no excuse. His very inability is criminal, and the greater it be, the more criminal.

Again, without maintaining the distinction here insisted on,

it is impossible, with any show of consistency, to give the right *directions* to the inquiring sinner. Those who regard his inability as natural,—one which he has no power of any kind to overcome, can only direct him to read and pray, and use means with such a heart as he has, and wait for God to give him a better heart. While those who take the other view will feel no hesitation in directing him, as God does, to make to himself a new heart and a new spirit; to repent of sin, and believe the gospel.

It may be further said, that without understanding the distinction in question, our need of the Holy Spirit, and the nature of his operations, cannot be rightly understood. We need the Spirit, not to increase our natural ability,—to give us any new faculties or natural powers. The difficulty lies, not in our want of faculties, but in the abuse of them. But we do need the influences of the Spirit, to overcome our *moral* inability,—the natural aversion of our hearts to God, and to make us willing in the day of his power,—*willing* to use the faculties he has given us in his service and for his glory.

I may further remark, that the distinctions here illustrated require to be understood, since without them it is impossible to refute the cavils of the captious and the subtle objections of unbelievers. Not a few of these objections owe all their plausibility to a confounding of the distinctions between natural and moral ability and natural and moral necessity; and it is impossible to detect the lurking fallacy, and remove the objections which are urged against us, but by restoring these too oft forgotten, but very obvious, distinctions.

But especially is it important to maintain the distinctions here insisted on, since without them it is impossible, with any logical consistency, to hold free agency and human accountability. Resolve all ability into natural ability, and all necessity into natural necessity; or say, with some, "An ability is an ability, and a necessity is a necessity, and there is no difference;" and (if we will be consistent) the decrees of God become fixed fate; man is transformed into a sort of intellectual automaton; virtue and vice are mere names; and free agency and human responsibility are gone forever.

LECTURE XXVIII.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG.

My present object is, to treat of the distinction between right and wrong. Is there any such radical distinction? If so, what is it, and on what does it rest?

Perhaps no theoretical question can be imagined of greater importance than this. And there is scarcely any, concerning which a greater diversity of opinion has been expressed.

Some have denied the distinction between right and wrong altogether. "There is no ground in nature for such a distinction. It exists only in the prejudices of vulgar minds." It is remarkable that atheists, materialists, fatalists, who adopt this theory, are as quick to resent an injury, or revenge a wrong, as other men. They may deny the distinction between right and wrong, in words, but it has place in their minds, and they can never be rid of it. The fact that this distinction has been held, in one form or another, by all nations, shows that it is grounded in our very natures, and therefore must be a reality.

But although all men, with few exceptions, have believed in the distinction between right and wrong, they have not been agreed as to the nature and the grounds of it. On these points a great variety of opinions has been entertained.

Aristotle taught that virtue was *a mean between two extremes*. It consists in the moderate and just exercise of all the affections and passions; whereas vice consists in defect or excess.

Epicurus made virtue to consist in the pursuit of our own *pleasure* or *happiness;* not using the word pleasure, however (as some of his followers did), in the grosser sense.

Hobbes, an English philosopher of the seventeenth century, insisted that there is no distinction between right and wrong,

except what is made by *the laws of the land*. The religion and the morality of every nation should be prescribed by the laws, and all the people are bound to conform to them.

Adam Smith believed that the origin of our moral feelings and distinctions is founded in *sympathy*. Our sense of the right or the wrong of an action depends on our sympathy with the agent, and with the object of the action. In sympathizing, for example, in the gratitude of others, we regard the object of their grateful feelings as worthy of reward. In sympathizing with the resentment of others, we regard the object of their displeasure as deserving of punishment.

It would be useless to pursue and refute any of these theories of morals. They once had their advocates and abettors, but are scarcely known at the present day. There are other theories, however, which require a more particular consideration.

It has been said, that the only difference between right and wrong lies in difference of *education*, of *manners*, and of *national customs*. We are accustomed to consider certain actions as right, and to us they are right. But where the religion and the customs of a people are different, they decide such questions—and they are entitled to—very differently. For example, the ancient Spartans thought it right to steal; the Roman Catholics think it right to pray to the Virgin Mary; and the heathen nations to worship idols. Some of the heathen think it right to destroy their aged parents and their infant children, and to immolate themselves on their bloody altars.

But what are we to infer from instances such as these? That there is no distinction between right and wrong? Or that individuals and nations, owing to improper training and example, are liable to mistake fatally as to what *is* right and what *is* wrong? In speaking of conscience, in a former Lecture, we defined it to be intellectually a *judgment* as to the moral quality of actions, connected with a *feeling* of approbation or disapprobation, according as they were judged to be right or wrong. Now that part of conscience which is a judgment belongs to the understanding; and the understanding has need of light and instruction in respect to moral subjects, as much as any other. Without light and instruction, or (what is worse) with

wrong instructions, the understanding is as sure to err on moral subjects as on any other. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, considering the darkness which prevails over a great part of the earth, the kind of instruction which is imparted, and the examples which are set, that mistakes should be made—great and fatal mistakes—as to what is right, and what is wrong. It is not to be wondered at that the heathen nations should, in many instances, "call evil good and good evil; and put darkness for light and light for darkness." Facts like those adverted to above do not disprove the distinction between right and wrong. So far from this, they clearly recognize such a distinction. They merely prove, that in tracing out and applying the distinction, men are not infallible, but are liable and likely, under wrong instruction, to make sad mistakes.

Some men have laid the foundation of the distinction between right and wrong in the *tendency* of actions; those actions being right, which are, on the whole, useful, or which tend to promote the general good, while all of an opposite tendency are wrong. In examining the theory here presented, it must be admitted that right action is always the most happy in its results. Its tendency, on the whole, is beneficial. But it by no means follows that such action is right, *because* it is beneficial. The presumption rather is, that there must be something excellent in the very nature of virtue or right, which *gives* it its beneficial tendency,—which makes it, under all circumstances, promotive of good.

It must be further admitted that, not unfrequently, in deciding questions of duty, we are under the necessity of going into considerations of expediency. We have no direct command of God for our guide, and the other lights which nature and reason hold out to us are not sufficient; so there is nothing left us but to determine, as we are able, what will be, on the whole, for the best. But it does not follow, from this circumstance, that the foundation of virtue lies in its beneficial tendency; but only that, from the fact of its beneficial tendency, we may sometimes determine (when all other means fail us) what actions are or will be right. The beneficial tendency, after all, may be but an appendage of the right action. Still, as it is an invariable

appendage, we may, in the absence of other means, refer to it in resolving questions of duty.

My objections to the theory of virtue now under consideration are the following:

1. It lays the foundation of virtue, not in its essential nature, but in its *tendencies* and *results*. And the question at once arises,—the same to which we just now adverted,—*Why* are the tendencies of virtuous action so uniformly happy? And must there not be something distinguishing and excellent in virtue itself—something which lies at the very foundation of it—which gives it its beneficial tendency, and secures the happy results which are seen to flow from it?

2. Our second objection to this theory is, that it represents happiness, or natural good, as preferable to holiness, or moral good. Holiness, according to the theory, is to be regarded only as a means of happiness. Happiness is the end, holiness is but the means. And since the end is always of more importance than the means, therefore happiness is better than holiness. But this is directly inverting the scriptural view of the subject, and also that which commends itself to the common sense and apprehensions of men. Holiness, according to the Scriptures, is the highest good. The excellence of God's character consists in his holiness; and we are commanded to be holy, for God is holy. It may be, and it is, a recommendation of holiness that its tendency is forever happy. This is one of the considerations which go to illustrate the excellent nature of holiness. But to say that its chief excellence lies here—that this is the grand characteristic trait which goes to separate holiness from sin—seems to me not only to degrade holiness, but to be unscriptural and absurd.

3. The theory before us contradicts the Scriptures in other points besides that here indicated. The Scriptures direct that "whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, all is to be done to the glory of God;" and that we are to "glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are God's." But the direction of this theory of virtue would be, "Consult your own happiness, and that of others. Do that, and that only, which will be likely to issue in the greatest happiness." Again, the inspired writers

reprobate the maxim that we are to "do evil that good may come." But, according to the view we are considering, it is impossible to "do evil that good may come;" because, if good comes of any particular action, or if it was the design of the actor that good should come of it, then the act itself was good, and not evil.

4. We object, finally, to the theory before us, that it resolves the whole science of morals into little more than a calculation of consequences. Whenever a question of duty arises, the inquiry, according to this doctrine, will naturally be, not so much what God commands and conscience approves, as what will be most promotive of happiness; not so directly, what is in itself right, as what will be the most expedient. I have before admitted that, in some few cases, we have no other means of determining a question of duty but by resolving it into one of general expediency. But it by no means follows that this is to be adopted as a leading or a common method of coming to a knowledge of our duty. In a great majority of cases the path of duty is clear, or may be made so, irrespective of consequences; and in every such case we are bound to follow it,—follow it up to the last inch, so far as it can be discovered, let the consequences be what they may.

Some writers have laid the distinction between right and wrong in the *mere will of the Supreme Being*. "Certain actions are right, because God has commanded them, and others are wrong, because he has forbidden them; and the natures of both would be instantly changed if such were his pleasure.

Before entering on the discussion of the question here presented, it is necessary to understand precisely what that question is. It is not this, whether the declared will of God is a *safe rule for us to follow*. Beyond all dispute, it *is* a safe rule. If the will of God *constitutes* the right, then certainly it is safe to follow it. And we come to the same conclusion if we regard the divine will as the mere *exponent* of the right. For we must remember, in this case, that God is infinitely wiser than we; that he knows infinitely better what is right, and that he certainly will not deceive us; so that when his will indicates to us

a particular course, we are bound to follow it, whether the reasons are obvious to us or not.

The question, then, is not this, whether it is safe and proper for us, under all circumstances, to obey the known will of God; but rather this, whether the mere pleasure of God *constitutes* the difference between right and wrong. Does his will make right right and wrong wrong; and could he, by a mere act of his will, change the one into the other? These questions I am constrained to answer in the negative, and for the following reasons:

1. If the will of God is the sole and ultimate standard of right, then it is naturally impossible for him to will wrong. It is *morally* impossible for God to will wrong. In other words, he is infinitely and unchangeably averse to the wrong. But if his will were the ultimate standard of right, it would be *naturally* impossible for him to will wrong. He could not do it, if he would. For whatever his will might be, it must be right, and that simply because it was his will. But a supposition such as this, instead of exalting the divine character, virtually destroys it. If it is naturally impossible for God to will wrong, what virtue or glory can there be in his willing right? It is the glory of the Supreme Being, not that he always does as he pleases, but that he always pleases to do right. His character is the admiration and delight of heaven, not merely because it is *his* character, and he always does his pleasure, but because his pleasure is always right. But this implies a standard of right, independent of the mere will and pleasure of God, to which his pleasure is conformed.

2. If God's will is the ultimate standard of right, then there is no *intrinsic* excellence in holiness or odiousness in sin. Holiness, on this ground, is good and right, because God willed it should be so; and sin is hateful, for the same reason; and there is no intrinsic, independent goodness in the one, or baseness in the other. But is such a supposition admissible? *Why* does God enjoin holiness, if it is not good in itself; or forbid sin, if it is not evil in itself? And if the one is good, and the other evil in itself, independent of the mere will of God, then there

must be a standard of good and evil, right and wrong, aside from his will.

3. If there is no standard of right prior, in the order of nature, to the will of God, then, previous to willing, he could have been under no moral obligations to will one way rather than another. Moral obligation necessarily implies some rule or standard out of the will itself, to which the person acting feels himself bound to conform his will. Hence, if there is no standard out of the will of God, then, previous to acting, he could have felt under no sort of obligation to will one way rather than another. He might will this, or that, and whatever he did will would, of course, be right, just because he willed it. But to conceive of a moral agent who is under no moral obligation, and never was and never can be, is perhaps impossible.

4. If the will of God is the ultimate standard of right, then he may *alter* the standard at pleasure. By a single act of his will he may make right wrong, and wrong right. But this is manifestly inconceivable and impossible. It is not irreverent to say that God cannot make right wrong and wrong right, more than he can perform any other natural impossibility.

5. It is evident that the will of God is not the ultimate standard of right, since he calls upon men *to judge of the rectitude of his conduct*. "Are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal?" "O my people! what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me." "Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard." Manifestly, there would be no propriety in appeals such as these, if the mere will of God was the ultimate standard of right. No doubt, his will conforms to his will. But there is a deeper question than this, on which his creatures are invited to sit in judgment; viz., *whether his will is right*. And this implies that there is a standard of right, common to him and to them, by which they are invited to judge of his dispensations.

6. If the will of God is the ultimate standard of right, then we need not trouble ourselves in investigating the *rectitude*, the *moral perfection* of the divine character. The *moral* perfections of God are not only the most important branch of natural the-

ology, but the part most difficult to be successfully demonstrated from the mere light of nature. But, on the theory here examined, there need be no difficulty. We have only to inquire whether God has a will of his own, and whether he acts according to it. If the will of God is the ultimate standard of right, then, be his will what it may, it must be right, and he must be a holy being. I hardly need say that the true question, as to the moral perfection of the divine character, is one very different from this.

7. If the will of God is the ultimate standard of right, then, beyond where he has revealed his will we have nothing to guide us; nor is there, in fact, any such thing to us as right or wrong. Some moral questions are so very obvious, that we feel as though we needed no revelation from heaven for our guide. "Why, even of yourselves," says our Saviour, "judge ye not what is right?" We feel that we are able to determine such questions of ourselves. But, on the theory before us, we are mistaken in these impressions. If the will of God is the ultimate standard of right, then, except where he has willed, there is no right; and except where we have a revelation of his will, we are left in utter darkness.

But I will not pursue this theory of morals further. The will of God, so far as known, is the infallible *exponent*, but not the ultimate standard, of right. It does not create the right, but reveals it, and is a binding rule of duty to all his intelligent creatures.

It is said by some, that the foundation of the distinction between right and wrong is laid in *the constitution* of the human mind. "We are so *constituted*, as to approve of certain actions as right, and disapprove and condemn their opposites as wrong." We shall have no occasion to go into a prolonged discussion of this theory, since it is open to the same objections as that last considered, and, in fact, amounts to much the same thing. It supposes no inherent, essential distinction between right and wrong, but resolves all into the constitution of the human mind. But who constituted the human mind? To whose power and will are we indebted for that particular mental constitution to which the theory refers? Of course, to the power and will of

God; and this becomes, as before, the foundation of the distinction between right and wrong. By the mere *fiat* of his will, he made the right and the wrong, and constituted us so that we judge of them accordingly.

It is pertinent to inquire here—and the inquiry, it is hoped, is not irreverent—whether God could have constituted us, in this respect, differently. Could he have so constituted his creatures, that it should be *right* for them—should be their *duty*—to hate himself; to hate, injure, and murder one another; or do any other palpably wrong thing? The very terms of the inquiry go to show the absurdity of it; and show that there must be an inherent and essential difference between right and wrong, which God has no more the ability, than he has the disposition, to change. God could make it the duty of Abraham to sacrifice his son; but not to *murder* him. He could make it the duty of Joshua to destroy the Canaanites; but not to do it with malice in his heart. He could make it the duty of Sennacherib to go and chastise the guilty nation of Israel; but not to do it from motives of spite and revenge. And because he went under the influence of such motives, God punished him for going. (See Is. x. 12.)

We have now examined several theories of morals, which, at different periods, have had their advocates, and have seen cause to reject them all. The question then returns, What theory is to be adopted? What is the true nature of virtue or holiness? What is the proper ground of distinction between right and wrong?

To these inquiries, I answer, the distinction between right and wrong is *immutable* and *eternal*. God did not create it, nor has he any power or inclination to alter it. It results from the very nature and relations of things. Ultimately, it may be said to lie in the nature of God himself. God exists as he is, from an inherent and eternal necessity. And being what he is, certain things, in distinction from others, were in eternity *fit*, *right*, and *proper* for him to do. His will did not make them right, but in the possession of omniscience, he perceived that they were right. They were *inherently* and *necessarily* so.

In pursuance of the right thus perceived, God formed his

eternal and universal plan, and has entered upon its execution. In carrying out this stupendous plan of providence, systems, suns, and worlds have been called into being. Intelligent spirits innumerable, in this world and in other worlds, have been created. They have been created in such manner, and with such natures, as in eternity God saw it to be right they should be.

These created spirits, being thus brought into existence, between each of them and its Creator there subsist now certain relations. And from these several relations result duties and obligation both ways. God being what he is, and I being what I am, certain things are *due*, both from me to him and from him to me. Certain courses of action, of treatment, are *fit*, *proper*, *right* for us, one way and the other. And the same may be said of every other intelligent creature in the universe.

The creatures of God, too, sustain certain relations to each other; and from these relations result mutual, reciprocal obligations. A particular course of conduct is *fit*, *proper*, *right*, on the part of parents towards their children, and of children towards their parents. Teachers have duties to discharge to their pupils, and pupils to their teachers. The same is true of ministers towards their people, and of people to their ministers. And so of all the various relations of life. Every intelligent being stands related, in some way, to every other, and has some resulting duty to perform towards every other of which he has any knowledge. The revealed will of God is the infallible *index* and *exponent* of right, but not that which creates the right, or establishes the distinction between right and wrong.

I have spoken of the right and the wrong of actions as resulting from the necessary relations of things; those actions which harmonize with these relations being right, and those of the opposite character being wrong. And if it be here inquired, how we become acquainted with these relations, and with the harmonies or duties growing out of them, more especially in cases where we have not the revealed will of God for our guide; the proper answer to this question throws us back on a subject which has been before discussed,—I mean, that of *conscience*. We described conscience, it will be remembered, not

as a simple faculty or power of the mind, but as a complex mental operation, one part of which belongs to the intellect, and the other to the sensibilities. The intellectual conscience belongs to that faculty which perceives relations, and which is commonly called *judgment*. The dictates of conscience, in this view of it, are *the judgments* which we form respecting the right and the wrong—the *moral quality* of actions. The intellectual conscience is not infallible. It is liable to mistake, and, with improper instruction, is very likely to make mistakes. As soon as the intellectual conscience has come to a decision, the *sentient* conscience begins to work. We begin to *feel* under obligations to perform the right perceived, and to *feel* self-approbation or remorse, according as the duty is discharged or neglected.

A question of some difficulty may here be asked: Ought a person always to follow the dictates of his conscience? In other words, Should he always do what seems to him to be right? In considering this question, it will be necessary to separate it from several others which have not unfrequently been confounded with it.

1. It is not a man's duty to act without consulting his conscience, from the mere promptings of *education*, *custom*, and *prejudice*. In this way, the heathen generally act. They assume that it is right for them to follow the religion of their fathers,—to worship the same idols, and observe the same hideous, barbarous rites.

In a loose sense of the term, they may be said to be sincere, and even conscientious, in their worship. And yet, it is hardly probable that they have ever looked at the subject in the clear, direct light of reason and conscience at all. They blindly follow the customs of their fathers, presuming that all is safe and well, but never stopping to ask any questions in regard to it.

2. It is not a man's duty to act under the influence of *hatred* and *passion*, which go to blind the understanding and stifle the voice of reason and conscience. This, it is presumed, has been the case generally with warriors, crusaders, and violent persecutors. They have no doubt that their cause is good, and they are very sincere, and (as they think) conscientious, in pursuing it, and yet they have never seriously and earnestly taken coun-

sel of their consciences, but only of their prejudices and passions. Like one of old, they "breathe out threatenings and slaughter," against the objects of their hate. They madly pursue them, even unto death, and vainly flatter themselves that they are doing God service.

3. It is not a man's duty to act from *self-will*, or *party zeal*, and plead conscience to justify him in all his extravagances. There is much of this kind of conscientiousness in the world. Men commit themselves, in the outset, to some particular sect, or party, or object of pursuit. They feel bound to approve of all the measures which are taken to promote it. The more contradiction they encounter, the more unreasonable and obstinate they become. Still, they fancy themselves very conscientious. They cannot, in conscience, swerve a hair's breadth from the course they are pursuing. Their unhappiness is, that they mistake bigotry and will for conscience, and substitute the former in place of the latter.

4. I remark once more, it is not a man's duty to act, in any important matter, *hastily*, or *in the dark*, without giving conscience a fair opportunity to decide the case, and bring in its verdict. Conscience, considered as an intellectual exercise, requires opportunity and means, in order that a satisfactory decision may be formed. It should be consulted deliberately, impartially, and prayerfully, in view of all the light which can be obtained. Such a dealing with conscience is indispensable, in order that it may be to us a wholesome guide; and those who treat their consciences differently, appealing to them hastily, partially, dubiously, blindly, can only be said to pervert and abuse them.

But here is a person, we will suppose, to whom some proposition of importance is made, on which he must decide one way or the other. He has no desire but to know his duty, and to do it. He looks at the case in all its bearings and relations, looks at it in the light of God's Word, and looks to God for direction in regard to it. At length, the path of duty is made seemingly plain to him. He knows, or he thinks he knows, what he ought to do. And now if it be asked whether this man shall follow the dictates of his conscience; I answer,

yes. Let him do what he intelligently and honestly thinks is right. And if it shall appear, afterwards, that he has made a mistake, the mistake, so far as he is concerned, is an innocent one. His conscience is easy. He has nothing with which to reproach himself in regard to it.

An action may be wrong in itself, which, to the person performing it, at the time, is not wrong. For example, an individual comes to me with some object of charity. I look into it with deliberation and care; I judge it to be a worthy object, and I patronize it accordingly. I cast in my mite to help it forward. But it afterwards appears that I have been imposed upon. The object was not a worthy one. It was not one which I should have favored, if I had understood it perfectly. In patronizing it, therefore, I may be said to have done a thing wrong in itself. I have aided to promote an object which, in my conscience, I now disapprove. But was the act *morally wrong* in me, at the time? Did I sin in performing it? I think not. I may regret the mistake into which I was led. I may regret that my money was worse than thrown away. But my conscience will never reproach me for having sinned, at the time,—for having perpetrated a moral wrong. It will be enough for me to say at the bar of God: "I sincerely, honestly, and after all the light that I could obtain, *thought* that I was doing right."

LECTURE XXIX.

NATURE OF HOLINESS AND OF SIN.

In our last Lecture, I endeavored to show, that although the law of God is the infallible index and exponent of right, it is not itself the ultimate standard of right,—that the distinction between right and wrong lies, primarily, in the very nature of the Supreme Being, and is, like his nature, immutable and eternal. We come now to inquire more particularly into the natures of *holiness* and of *sin*.

It is obvious, first of all, that holiness is conformity, and sin a want of conformity, in moral character and conduct, to the standard of right; or, in other words, that holiness is the same as *moral right*, and sin the same as *moral wrong*. On this point there can be no dispute.

It may be further remarked, that sin and holiness are, in their natures, *active*. They are not dormant, passive things, but are the properties of our free, intelligent, thinking, active minds. They are properties into which the voluntary element always enters; with which the will has more or less to do.

We do not mean by this that sin and holiness attach only to our executive volitions and outward actions. We use the term *voluntary* in a much wider sense. Nor do we mean that all our internal moral affections are *purely* voluntary. Many of them are of a complex character; partly intellectual, partly sentient, and but partly voluntary. Thus repentance (in the larger sense of the term) involves conviction of sin, which is chiefly intellectual; sorrow for sin, which is chiefly sentient; and a turning from sin, which is voluntary. Other of our mental affections are holy or sinful, because they are more or less under the control of the will. This is true of our trains of thought. These

are so much under the direction of the will, that improper thoughts, when indulged, become sinful thoughts; and proper thoughts are holy thoughts. And so also of many of our sentient feelings. We are commanded to be of good cheer, to rejoice in the Lord, and to sympathize with those around us in their sorrows and their joys. The states of mind here inculcated are chiefly sentient; and yet they are so much under the control of the will, that they are with propriety enjoined upon us, and, when duly exercised, they are right, or holy.

I make these explanations, that I may not be misunderstood. When we say that our holy and sinful affections are in their natures active, and to some extent voluntary, we do not confine sin and holiness to our mere executive volitions, or to such internal affections as are purely voluntary; but we do understand that into them all the voluntary element more or less enters, so as to give them a free and active character, and consequently a moral character. In proof of the active, and (to some extent) voluntary nature of holiness and sin, I urge,—

1. That holiness is the subject of direct *command*, and sin of positive *prohibition*, in the Scriptures. We are commanded to be holy; we are forbidden to be sinful. "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." This is the substance of all the commands and prohibitions of the Bible. Now, though there are various things involved in these commands and prohibitions, they are all addressed, obviously, to our active natures; and the things required or forbidden imply some exercise of will. The imperative phraseology, *Do this* or *Do that*, or *Thou shalt not do this*, or *Thou shalt not do that*, implies that there is something *to be done*, or *not done*,—something in which the subject is supposed to be active.

No reasonable parent ever requires that of a child in which the child is not regarded as free and active. And none but a tyrant ever requires that of a subject in which the subject is not free and active. What would be thought of the king of Timbuctoo or Fezzan, if he should command his sable subjects to become instantly white? Or what would be thought of any other king, who should command his subjects, under penalty of death, to change their very natures,—the constitution and faculties of

their bodies, or their souls? And shall we charge upon the Monarchy of heaven a degree of tyranny and cruelty which would disgrace to scandal any monarchy on earth? Shall we suppose God to require that of his intelligent creatures, under penalty of his eternal displeasure, in which they are not active, and over which they have no voluntary power? Yet God does require his intelligent creatures to hate and forsake every form of sin, and to practise all holiness. What, then, are we to infer as to the natures of holiness and sin? Can we avoid the conclusion (if God is just) that sin and holiness, in all their forms, must be of an active nature and character? But,—

2. God not only issues commands and prohibitions, but he uses all proper *motives* with his sinful creatures, to induce them to forsake their sins and become holy. He invites them, entreats them, pleads and reasons with them, and urges every motive which ought to have influence upon their minds and hearts. Now all this implies, necessarily, that holiness and sin are proper objects of persuasion; or, in other words, that they are of an active nature. On any other supposition, motives would be quite out of place, and all attempts at persuasion would be impertinent.

3. In proof of the active nature of sin and holiness, we may further urge the testimony of *conscience*. It will not be doubted that conscience approves of all that is holy within us, and condemns what is sinful. But does conscience ever approve or condemn us; do we feel worthy of praise or blame, reward or punishment, for that in which we have had no active concern? Let any person make the experiment. Let him try it on himself, or on another. The African may feel, perhaps, that his complexion is his misfortune; but endeavor to impress on him a sense of guilt, and make him feel that he is to blame, and deserving of punishment, on account of the color of his skin, and see if you can succeed in the undertaking. But why not? The most ignorant African has sense enough to reply to all your arguments: "I did not make the color of my skin. I had no active concern in it. How, then, am I blameworthy for it?" This is a subject on which the common sense of all men speaks out; and to force a theological dogma, or a philosophical specu-

lation, in opposition to common sense, is to encounter an invincible assailant.

Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret. No man ever felt himself blameworthy,—no man's conscience ever approved or condemned him, for that in which he was not himself active. It follows, therefore, since our consciences do approve us for whatever we have that is holy, and condemn us for all our sins, that holiness and sin are in their natures active.

4. In proof of the same point, we further urge, that it is for *their deeds only* that men are to give an account in the day of judgment. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things *done in his body*, according to that he *hath done*, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10). "Who shall render to every man according to *his deeds*" (Rom. ii. 6). "Then shall he reward every man, according to *his works*" (Matt. xvi. 27). It is evident, from these and similar passages, that all the holiness of men, and all their sins, are to be regarded as, in some sense, *deeds* or *works;* which is only saying, in other words, that in all their holiness and sin they are active.

The Apostle John has given us a definition of sin, in which the same view is presented. "Sin is a transgression of the law." And lest this might not be thought sufficiently explicit, he tells us, in the same verse, what he means by a transgression of the law. It is *actively* to commit sin. "He that *committeth sin* transgresseth also the law" (1 John iii. 4).

It may be objected to the views above exhibited, that they leave wholly out of the account our sin of *nature*. Our very natures, some tell us, are sinful;—so sinful, that, without a change in them, we can no more perform a good action than a lion can become a lamb, or a viper a dove. This sinful nature is represented as the very fountain of corruption, out of which all actual transgressions flow, and without which there could be no sin in the world.

Before replying directly to this objection, let us ascertain more specifically how much is meant by it. We hold to the doctrine of *natural and entire depravity;*—that men are the subjects of a natural bias or tendency to evil, under the influence of which

sin is *natural* to them. They fall into it from the first moment of their existence, and persist in it till renewed by sovereign grace. And if the advocates of a *sinful nature* mean by it an *active nature*,—something which stirs itself freely, spontaneously, actively, sinfully; we agree with them in respect to that. But to the notion of a sinful nature which is *not* active,—which is back of everything active within us,—the origin of all actual transgression, and without a change of which no good action can possibly be performed; we have very strong objections.

1. This theory presents us with *two entirely different kinds of sin*. There is one kind of sin in which we are active, and for which we feel guilty, and are conscious of deserving blame and punishment. There is another kind of sin in which we have had no active concern, and for which we never feel guilty. We may regard our sinful nature as our calamity, but can never think of it as our fault, our crime, for which we may justly be blamed and punished.

2. The theory here examined makes God the responsible author of sin,—at least of that sin which attaches to our nature, and which is the source and fountain of all the rest. If God is not its responsible author, who is? Certainly *we* have had no active concern in its origination. It was born with us; it attaches to the very constitution of our souls; and must be charged, for aught I see, upon the great Author of our being.

3. The theory under consideration divests us entirely and confessedly of all *natural ability* to do our duty. We are utterly disabled. Until our natures are changed—and in this change of nature we are entirely passive—we can no more perform a good action than we can fly without wings, or work miracles. Hence,—

4. The Bible, on this ground, is utterly at fault, in *requiring* sinners to do their duty, and in threatening them so severely in case they refuse to comply. It is at fault, also, in urging *motives* upon sinners, to induce them to do what they have no natural ability to perform.

5. On this ground, ministers have little or nothing to do for the sinner, unless it be to pity him, condole with him, pray for him, and commend him to the mercy of God, who peradventure

may have mercy upon him. Certainly, ministers can give no directions to the sinner, according to this theory, except that he use means with such a nature as he has, and wait and pray for God to change it.

6. I object again to the theory in question, that it is inconsistent with *facts* recorded in the Scriptures. This theory accounts for all sin by referring it to a sinful nature, and denies that actual sin can be conceived of as possible on any other grounds. How, then, are we to account for the first sin of the rebel angels, and for that of our first parents? Did their first sin arise from a sinful nature? Again,—

7. This theory involves a palpable *absurdity*,—that of supposing a sin before the first sin, and without which the first sin could never have been committed.

But I will pursue this theory no further. It is a theory not of the Bible, but of the schools. It is a philosophical theory, or rather a very unphilosophical one, of stating and defending some of the doctrines of the Gospel. The views of holiness and sin which have been presented in this Lecture as being in their natures free and active, run clear of all the above objections, and are in strict accordance with the Bible, with sound philosophy, and with common sense. And these views we deem of great importance to the gospel minister; and that for two reasons:—

1. On this ground, he will be able to present the gospel urgently and faithfully, without involving himself in perpetual inconsistencies and self-contradictions. He can urge unregenerate men to repent and make to themselves new hearts, believing that the change to which they are urged it one in which they are themselves active, and which they have the *natural* ability to accomplish. But suppose sin to enter into the very constitution of the soul, so that the sinner is not active in it, or in the radical, original part of it, and has no power of any kind to turn from it and become holy; and the preacher who so understands the subject must either cease to preach as the apostles did, and urge sinners to repentance, or he must involve himself in perpetual inconsistencies and self-contradictions. For if we exhort the sinner with one breath to repent, and with the next tell him

that he is utterly disabled and has no power of any kind to turn from his sins and do his duty; we may urge what we please in self-justification, he will say, and say truly, that we contradict at one time what we assert at another, and that we preach inconsistently and absurdly. And with such an impression on his mind, we shall be little likely to secure his confidence or to do him good.

2. The views which have been exhibited are also important, because they furnish the only ground on which the minister of Christ can meet and direct the anxious inquirer. An inquiring sinner comes to me with the question of the jailer, "Sir, what must I do to be saved?" I answer, as the apostle did, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But he replies, "My dear sir, I cannot believe. I have not been regenerated. I am in a state of sin. I have no ability or capacity to change my heart and become holy. You have told me so a thousand times. And why do you direct me to the performance of that, which *you* insist that I have no power to do?" To an appeal such as this, what could I reply? Manifestly nothing,—unless I recede from the ground of the apostle, and tell him, at the risk of his soul's salvation, to do what he can, and God peradventure will do the rest; to seek and use means with such a heart as he has, and wait for God to give him a better heart.

But on the ground taken in this Lecture, there is no difficulty in directing the inquiring sinner. If sin and holiness are in their natures active, and the change from the former to the latter is an active change, which the sinner is naturally able and under obligations to accomplish, so that he needs the Spirit, not to give him any new natural powers, but rather to incline him to use the powers he has in a proper manner; then there is no difficulty in addressing him just as the Bible does. "Cease to do evil, and learn to do well." "Choose life." "Make you a new heart and a new spirit." "Repent ye and believe the gospel."

But we need not dwell longer on the active nature of sin and holiness. We now take another step in the investigation of the subject, and remark that all holiness is comprised in *impartial*

benevolence or *disinterested love;* and all sin in *selfishness.* By impartial, disinterested love, we mean a love to *being in general,* and to all beings of whom we have any knowledge, in proportion to their perceived worthiness. It fixes upon God above all, because he is infinitely more worthy than all other beings; and it fixes on created beings, and on self among the rest, just in proportion to perceived worthiness. This holy, impartial, disinterested love is supposed to be the *primary ingredient,* the *element* of all holiness. It lies at the foundation, it constitutes the basis, of every holy affection. The truth of this statement is evident,—

1. From what is said in Scripture as to *the character of God.* "God is *love.*" His whole moral character is comprised in, and may be resolved into, holy, disinterested love. His justice, his mercy, his truth, his faithfulness, indeed every moral perfection of his nature, are but varied manifestations of benevolence. But holiness is of the same pure and excellent nature everywhere, and if all the holiness of God may be resolved into benevolence, the same is true of the holiness of creatures. It is believed that every holy affection, if carefully analyzed, will be found to have its primary ingredient, its element, in holy love.

2. The law of God, in the most summary expression of it, requires nothing but love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It is evident, from this important fact, that the spirit, the element, of every duty and of every form of holiness is love. He who possesses this spirit and exemplifies it in every proper way, fulfils the whole law, and does his whole duty.

3. On this point other passages of Scripture are full and decisive. Our Saviour, having repeated the two great injunctions of the law, requiring us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves, adds, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. xxii. 40). The Apostle Paul represents this holy, impartial love, as "the bond of perfection," "the end of the commandment," "the fulfilling of the law." He moreover assures us, in the most emphatic terms, that

whatever else a man may do or have, if he have not *charity*, or *holy love*, he is nothing.*

And as all holy affections are essentially benevolent, so all sinful ones may be resolved into *selfishness*. By selfishness we mean, not that instinctive desire of happiness, which is a mere feeling, and which no one can or should repress; nor that love of ourselves which we are bound to exercise, as being part of the great whole; not that care and interest which every one is bound to take in respect to his own proper concerns, without needlessly interfering with those of his neighbors. But by selfishness we do mean *a supreme love of self;* a setting up of self above everything else, making it a central point, and estimating other objects chiefly, if not solely, as they bear upon this. Selfishness, in this sense, is the opposite of that benevolence which comprises all holiness, and consequently may be regarded as comprising all sin. As every holy affection may be resolved into benevolence, so envy, avarice, pride, revenge, and every other sinful affection may be resolved into selfishness. To be selfish, in the sense explained, is, in *spirit*, to break every command of God, and to indulge a temper which is the root and element of all wickedness.

Remarks.

1. In prizing his own glory above every other object, God is not selfish. His glory is intrinsically of more value than every other object; and hence, impartial, disinterested love requires him thus to regard it.

2. As holiness is everywhere the same in essence, it varies only in respect to its objects. Holy affections assume different forms and take different names, according as they are put forth in view of different objects. Thus, the same kind of affection which, in view of God's holy character, is complacent love, will be penitence, in view of personal sin; gratitude, in view of a benefactor; trust, in view of the Saviour; submission, in view of the claims of God's government; and a feeling of benevolence, in view of lost sinners. The object of the holy affection changes, and with it the name and form of the affection; but its

* See Col. iii. 14. 1 Tim. 1. 5. Rom. xiii. 10. 1 Cor. xiii. 1–3.

nature is always the same at the bottom, — in its element it is always holy, disinterested love.

3. The views here presented of holiness and of sin, as consisting essentially in benevolence and selfishness, go to confirm the statements previously made as to the active nature of both the one and the other. Certainly there can be no benevolence or selfishness which is not active. A passive benevolence, a passive selfishnesss, is a contradiction in terms.

LECTURE XXX.

THE INTRODUCTION OF SIN.

From very ancient times, the human mind has been exercised with inquiries and theories as to the origin of evil. As long ago as the days of the prophets, the Persian magi believed in the existence of two opposite divinities, the god of light and the god of darkness; the author of good and the author of evil. It was to contradict this error that God says, by the Prophet Isaiah, in the same chapter in which he speaks of Cyrus the Persian by name, and predicts his conquest of Babylon: "I am the Lord, and there is none else. There is no God beside me. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things" (Isa. xlv. 7).

The old Greek philosophers had their speculations and hypotheses on the same subject. It was the difficulties of it, among other things, which led Epicurus into atheism. His mode of reasoning was as follows: "God either has the will, but not the power, to prevent evil; or he has the power, but not the will; or he has neither the power nor the will. If he has the will, but not the power, he is *impotent*, which cannot be true of God. If he has the power, but not the will, he is *malignant*, which is equally foreign from God. If he has neither the will nor the power, he is both *malignant* and *impotent*, and therefore is not God. If he has both the will and the power, which alone harmonizes with the idea of God, whence then is evil? and why doth he not remove it?" *

The Oriental or Gnostic philosophy is of very ancient origin. It had infected the minds of a portion of the Jewish nation previous to the coming of Christ. It began to threaten and to corrupt the Christian community, even under the ministry of

* In Lactantius de Ira Dei. Cap. 13.

the apostles. The root of most of the Gnostic errors lay in the question as to the origin of evil. These philosophers believed *matter* to be essentially evil, and the source of all the evils that exist. Hence, they did not regard this material world as the work of a good being, but of some evil and inferior divinity. Their views of matter led them to practise "a voluntary humility and neglecting of the body" (Col. ii. 23). They also denied the resurrection of the body, believing in none but a spiritual resurrection, and that in respect to Christians this was "past already" (2 Tim. ii. 18). They denied, too (or a portion of them did) that our Saviour had a real body, insisting that he lived and died and rose again only in appearance. It was this form of the error which led the Apostle John to insist so strenuously that Jesus Christ had "come in *the flesh*," and that he had not only seen but "*handled* the Word of life" (1 John i. 1; iv. 2). These Gnostic errors which troubled the church under various forms for the first two or three hundred years, all had a common character and origin. They arose from the restless inquiries of the human mind as to the origin of evil.

The Manichean heresy originated in the same vexed question, and was a mingling of the Persian dualism with Christian Gnosticism. The system of Manes rested on the assumption of two everlasting kingdoms, coexisting and bordering on each other,—the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness,—the former under the dominion of God, the latter under the dominion of Hyle, or matter. Manes threw away the Old Testament entirely, and the greater portion of the New, declaring himself to be *the Paraclete*, the promised Comforter from heaven.

There were those in the early church who, from their dread of Gnosticism, were led into error in the opposite direction. They regarded all sin among men as the fruit of demoniacal agency. This, with other things, led to the general practice of exorcism. Before any were baptized and admitted to the church, their evil spirits must be ejected.

I have presented these historical facts for the purpose of showing in one view how much and how long the human mind has been laboring on the question as to the origin of evil. Nor is this at all wonderful. The question is a difficult one,—per-

haps the most difficult that ever tasked the ingenuity of man. Believing as we do in the existence of one God,—a being of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness,—it would not be difficult to demonstrate, if we had no facts to guide and correct our reasonings, that there could be no such thing as sin or misery in the universe. For is not God wise enough so to form his plans as to secure universal holiness and happiness? Is he not good enough to prefer such a plan as this? And has he not power enough to execute it? How, then, can there be sin, or misery, or evil of any kind, under the government of the Supreme Being? This would seem to be a plain moral demonstration. And yet, when we rise from it and look about us, we find this to be a sinful and a miserable world,—"a vale of tears and a field of blood."

There are some, we know, who would cut the knot, instead of untying it. They deny the existence of evil altogether. "There is that, to be sure, which we *call* evil; but it is impossible that there should be any real sin or wrong anywhere. One man does the will of God as much as another, and in the sight of God all are good alike." It is remarkable that men of this stamp are as quick to resent personal affronts and injuries as any others. And a fit of the colic or the gout might soon satisfy them that suffering was more than a name.

The principal questions which now agitate the church in respect to the introduction of sin, are the two following:—

1. Did sin enter the universe because God was not able to prevent it, in consistency with the free agency of his creatures? Or,

2. Did sin enter because God—perceiving that he could overrule its existence for a greater good—was pleased to permit it?

There may be speculatists, here and there, who come not under either of these categories. There may be those who say that sin entered the universe through the agency of creatures *exclusively*,—that God had nothing to do with it. But this is to deny the universal providence of God, and contradict a thousand declarations of the Bible. There may be others who go to the other extreme and say, that sin was introduced, not by the permission of God, but by *direct causation*. "I form the

light and *create darkness;* I make peace and *create evil;* I the Lord do all these things." But how does God "create evil"? By a special exercise of power, such as he put forth when he created the world? Or is he said to *cause*, to *create*, that which comes to pass in the regular course of his providence, and which he puts forth no special effort to prevent? It is in this latter sense, undoubtedly, that God is sometimes said in the Scriptures to *harden* the hearts of men, and to *create evil.* Pursuing the courses they do, men's hearts *become hard under the providence of God*, and nothing but a miracle could prevent it. Another phraseology, however, is very often used in the Bible, implying a *sufferance* of evil, a *permission* of it, rather than a direct causation. "Who in times past *suffered* all nations to walk in their own way" (Acts xiv. 16). "I *gave them up* to their own hearts' lusts" (Ps. lxxxi. 12). He "*gave them over* to a reprobate mind" (Rom. i. 28).

Setting aside these extremists, therefore, we come back to the two questions above propounded: Did sin enter the universe because God was not able to prevent it, in consistency with the free agency of his creatures? Or, did it enter because God—perceiving that he could overrule its existence for a greater good—was pleased to permit it? The first of these questions has been answered in the affirmative by Arminian writers generally, and by some Universalists and infidels.* It has been answered in the negative by Calvinists, almost without an exception; who, consequently, have been thrown upon the other hypothesis, in accounting for the introduction of sin.†

* Thus Heylin, an Arminian of the seventeenth century, says: "God neither did decree sin, as a means or method of which he could make use, nor did he so much as permit it, in the strict sense of the word, considering that he that doth permit, *having power to hinder*, is guilty of the evil that doth follow on it."—*Sum. of Chris. Theol.* p. 86.

The Chevalier Ramsey, a Universalist says: "God did not certainly know that his creatures would fall; and if he had known it, *he could not have hindered it*, consistently with their free agency."

In Bellamy's Works, first edition, vol. ii. p. 106, Mr. Chubb argues that God could not have prevented moral evil, but by "preventing himself from making such creatures as we are." Rousseau says: "Man, be patient. The evils you suffer are a necessary effect of nature. The eternal and beneficent Being would have been glad to exempt you from them. The reason why he has not done better is, that *he could not.*"—*Letter to Voltaire.*

† Calvin.—"That is not done *without* God's will, which yet is *contrary* to his will; because it would not be done if he did not permit it. And this permission is not invol-

With regard to the first of the theories here proposed, viz., God's *inability* to exclude sin, it is plain that its existence, on this ground, involves *no mystery*. The introduction of sin into the universe has commonly been regarded as a dark and mysterious event? But what mystery in the taking place of that which God could not prevent? What mystery in the entrance of that into his dominions, to exclude which had been in the nature of things impossible?

Again; on this ground there is no propriety in speaking of God's *permission* of sin. It has been customary in all ages for Orthodox ministers to use this phraseology. But on the theory we are considering, there is no propriety in it. Why tell of God's *permitting* that which, in the circumstances of the case, he had no power to prevent? As well might *we* be said to permit the rising or the setting of the sun, or the return of winter and summer in their seasons.

untary, but voluntary. Nor would his goodness permit the perpetration of any evil, unless his omnipotence were able even from evil to educe good."—*Institutes*, book i. chap. 18, sect. 3.

Archbishop Usher.—"God is said to permit sin, because *he could*, by his grace, *hinder and prevent sin*, that none should be committed."—*Sum. and Substance of the Chris. Religion*, p. 52.

Charnock.—"Sin entered the world, either God willing the permission of it, or not willing the permission of it. The latter cannot be said; for then the creature is more powerful than God, and can do that which God will not permit. God can, if he be pleased, banish all sin in a moment out of the world. *He could have prevented the revolt of angels, and the fall of man. They did not sin, whether he would or no.*"—*Works*, folio edition, vol. i. p. 520.

Bates.—"The divine power could have preserved man in his integrity, either by laying a restraint on the apostate angels, that they should never have made an attempt upon him, or by keeping the understanding waking and vigilant to discover the danger of the temptation, and by fortifying the will and rendering it impenetrable to the fiery darts of Satan without any prejudice to its freedom."—*Works*, vol. i. p. 212.

John Howe.—"God made man upright; but he must needs fall to his own inventions to mend it, and try if he could not make to himself a better state than God had made for him. It was never to be expected from the divine goodness that he should by almighty, extraordinary power have prevented this;"—necessarily implying that God could have prevented it.—*Works*, vol. vii. p. 120.

Ridgley.—"*God might have prevented the first entrance of sin into the world*, by his immediate interposure, and so have kept man upright as well as made him so. Yet let it be considered that he was not obliged to do this, and therefore might, without any reflection on his holiness, leave an innocent creature to the conduct of his own will."—*Body of Divinity*, vol. i. p. 161.

Dr. Gill.—"God could have kept the serpent out of the garden, and he could have hindered the temptation from having any influence upon our first parents; but this he did not; nor did he withhold Adam from sinning; *which he could have done.*"—*Body of Divinity*, p. 464.

Dr. Dwight (in a passage just quoted in a note) infers God's ability to preserve Adam in innocence, from the fact that he has hitherto kept the elect angels from sin, and will keep them and the glorified saints in heaven forever. And the argument we think a sound one. But there is a stronger argument than this, —an argument based on *the conversion of sinners*. If God can overcome the innate depravity of the natural heart; can turn back the perverted currents of the ruined soul,—in other words, can *convert a sinner*,—and yet do nothing inconsistent with his free agency; surely, it might seem, he could preserve a sinless being in its integrity, or all sinless beings, and yet they be free. If he can recover lost souls without infringing upon their freedom, can he not keep such as are not lost? If he can do the greater, must he not be able to perform the less?

It is said, indeed, that the universe, as it was when sin first entered it, did not supply *motive* enough to enable the Almighty to keep the first transgressors from sin. God needed the motives

President Willard.—"*God could have assisted Adam, and kept him; but he did not.*"—*Body of Divinity*, p. 179.

President Edwards.—"Objectors may say that God cannot always prevent men's sins, unless he act contrary to the free nature of the subject, or without destroying men's liberty. But will they deny that an omnipotent and infinitely wise God could possibly invent and set before men such strong motives to obedience, and have kept them before them in such manner as should have influenced all mankind to continue in their obedience, as the elect angels have done, without destroying their liberty?"—*Decrees and Election*, sect. 19.

It would be superfluous to quote here from Drs. Bellamy and Hopkins, both of whom wrote and published Discourses on "The Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin," which are contained in their Works.

Dr. Dwight.—"God has actually preserved some of the angels from falling, and will preserve the spirits of just men made perfect; and this has been and will be done, without infringing at all on their moral agency. Of course *he could just as easily have preserved Adam from falling, without infringing on his moral ageney.*"—*Theology*, vol. i. p. 523.

Dr. Knapp.—"God foresaw the existence of evil, and permits it; but so far as it is evil, he can never have pleasure in it, or himself promote or favor it. He has admitted it into his general plan, because he can make it, in connection with other things, the means of a good, which, without it, either could not be effected at all, or at least not so well, as by its being permitted."—*Theology*, vol. i. p. 523.

Dr. Payson.—"Why God should permit angels or men to fall, we cannot tell. That he did permit them to fall is certain; because, had he thought proper, *he could doubtless have prevented their apostasy.*"—*Sermons*, vol. i. p. 43.

Dr. Lyman Beecher.—"God loves holiness, and he abhors sin, and *was able to prevent its existence.* He could have forborne to create whom he foresaw would rebel, or *he was able to keep them from falling.* But he did not do it. Abhorring sin with all his heart, and *able to keep it out of his dominions*, he permitted it to enter."—*Sermon at the Funeral of Obookiah*, p. 5.

arising from the fall and ruin of a portion of his creatures, to enable him to sustain the rest. But we ask, in reply: Are not the motives in favor of holiness always *intrinsically* stronger than those in favor of sin? In other words, Are there not always stronger and better reasons for doing right than for doing wrong? Can any sober person doubt this? Hence, that the motives for the right may *appear* the stronger, may strike the mind with the greatest force, and consequently prevail, it is only necessary that the mind be prepared to receive them, and that they be exhibited in their true light. And could not God have done all this for his creatures—done it under any supposable circumstances—without encroaching upon their freedom? Could he not have kept them from ignorance, prejudice, and bias; caused them to see things in their proper light, and to feel the due force of them; and thus have kept them from falling into sin?

The theory that God could not, by the presentation of motives, have kept his creatures from falling into sin, is inconsistent with itself. According to this theory, the beings who first fell, fell from the want of motives to sustain them. The universe as it then was did not furnish motives sufficient to enable the Almighty to hold them up. And yet, on the same theory, in the very act of their fall they overcame such powerful motives, and broke through so many and endearing obligations, as to render themselves hopelessly guilty and deserving of eternal condemnation. The theory is therefore inconsistent with itself. If one part of it is true, the other cannot be. If the angels fell through such a deficiency of motive that it was not possible even for the Almighty to sustain them, it would seem that they could not be very criminal for their transgression. On the other hand, if their fall was exceedingly criminal,—so criminal as justly to expose them to eternal condemnation (which all but the Universalists believe),—then they must have resisted and overcome a vast amount of motive,—motives enough, surely, had they been set home by accompanying divine influences, to have restrained them effectually from sin.

But we need not pursue this argument further. The supposition that God could not have kept the original transgressors of his law from sin without destroying their freedom, is incon-

sistent with his divine perfections; it is inconsistent with the plain declarations of Scripture; it is inconsistent with his entire providential control over the moral world. In short, it is inconsistent with his very Godhead, and should never be admitted by those who look up to him as the Almighty Sovereign of the world.

It follows, then, that God *could* have excluded sin from his dominions, but did not. He, without doubt, afforded to the original transgressors all that light and support which were necessary, in order to continue their free moral agency and make them responsible; but those *special* restraints which, in a season of temptation he might have afforded, and which were needed to hold them back from sin, he, for wise reasons, withheld. In other words, he *permitted* them to sin. Why? When he might have excluded sin forever from his dominions, why did he suffer it to enter?

Not, certainly, because he loves it; for he hates it with a perfect hatred.

Not because he felt indifferent in regard to it; for in such a case he could not have been indifferent.

Neither because sin is a direct means of good, or has any tendency to good; for all its tendencies are the other way.

I know not how to answer the question before us but by falling back on the second of the theories suggested above: God permitted sin to enter his dominions, because he saw that he could so *turn it against itself* as to make it the occasion of an overbalancing amount of good,—because he saw that, by overruling, counteracting, and crushing it, and redeeming a portion of his creatures from it, he could make a brighter exhibition of his glory, and better promote the good of the universe, than would be possible in any other way. Without sin, there could have been no redemption. The great work of redeeming mercy had not been needed, and could never have been known; and the superior lustre of the divine character, beaming forth from that noble work, had been shut out from the view of creatures forever.

God, we are told, hath made all things for himself. With him, his own glory—involving, as it does, the highest good of

the universe—is, as it should be, the grand object. If, therefore, God saw in eternity that he could best glorify himself in redemption,—and there could have been no redemption without sin,—then a sufficient reason is furnished for the permission of sin.

That the work of redemption is God's best and noblest work, in that it best exhibits his character, and sheds forth the effulgence of his glory, there can be no doubt. As much as this is intimated in the song of the angels at the birth of Christ. "Glory to God in *the highest*," in that there is "peace on earth and good will towards men" (Luke ii. 14). The other works of God are not, indeed, unworthy of him, nor are they silent in showing forth his praise. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." The works of creation and providence display the infinite wisdom of God, his mighty power, and his general goodness; and before redemption was revealed, the flames of the pit below had flashed upon the universe the terrors of his justice. But, as yet, the *heart* of the Deity had not been opened. His mercy, his tenderness, his compassion, his long-suffering, his forbearance, towards self-destroyed and self-destroying enemies, had not been exhibited. It was left for the work of redemption to do this, and thus to spread abroad the glory of the divine character forever.

It is reasonable to suppose that the holiness and happiness of heavenly beings are in proportion to their knowledge of the divine perfections and character. The more they know of God, the more they love him; and the more they know and love him, the more they enjoy him. But, if this be so, who can estimate how much more the blessed inhabitants of heaven know of the character of God, and how much more they love and enjoy him, in consequence of redemption? Who can estimate the vast increase of happiness in heaven,—an increase which in the end may far overbalance all the miseries which sin has ever occasioned, or ever will, in consequence of redemption?

We are told by our Saviour that there is "joy in heaven over one *sinner* that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance" (Luke xv. 7). We learn

from this statement that the joy of heaven is increased ninety-nine times and more—how much more we know not—by the repentance of a sinner, beyond what it would have been had there been no sin. In this proportion it is easy to see that the existence of sin may be an ultimate gain to the universe; and consequently that God had the best reasons for permitting it.

That God may in the end overrule the existence of sin, and of all sin, for an overbalancing amount of good, is evident from the consideration that we often *see* him overruling particular sins in this way in the present life. Take, for example, the sin of Joseph's brethren in selling him into Egypt. "Ye thought evil against me, but *God meant it for good;*" and he overruled it for a greater good. Take the sin of Saul, in persecuting David. But for these wicked persecutions the church of God had never had many of the devoutest, sweetest, and most instructive of the Psalms. The same may be said of the sin of Pharaoh, in refusing to let God's people go; of the sin of Haman, in plotting against the Jews; and of the sin of those who crucified the Saviour. The same, too, may be said of the sin of Henry VIII. in wishing to repudiate his wife; and of the sin of Queen Elizabeth and her successors, in persecuting the Puritans. The former sin was overruled for the introduction of the Protestant Reformation into England; the latter, for the settlement of this country by the pious Pilgrims. But if God often does, in this life, overrule particular sins for a greater good, then he *may* overrule all the sin which he permits to exist in the same way; and the conclusion is a reasonable one that he will. He will bring light out of darkness and good out of evil. He will cause the wrath and wickedness of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain.

Objections.

1. It has been often said, that in taking this view of the subject we represent God as "doing evil that good may come." But we do not represent God as doing evil at all. He acts from the best motives in the permission of sin. He does what the greatest good of the whole requires. So far from doing evil

that good may come, he does good that good may come. He does that which is good, in a particular way, that a greater good may result, in another way.

2. It has been said that, on the ground we have taken, sin is a *necessary means* of the greatest good. But sin is not a means of good at all. Means is a relative term, standing connected with some end, and having a *tendency*, an *adaptedness*, to promote that end. But sin has no tendency to result in good. All its tendencies are the other way. And it is only by overruling and reverting its evil tendencies, by counteracting and crushing it, and redeeming its victims from it, that sin becomes the necessary *occasion* in providence—not a means—of good to the universe and glory of God.

3. It has been even said that the view we have taken makes sin a *good thing*. But no representation, certainly, could be more false or unfounded. We represent sin as *the worst of all things*,—so base in itself and so ruinous in its tendencies that the Son of God must die to expiate it, and infinite grace and mercy are manifested in redeeming its victims from its power. A good thing could not stand in the place of sin and be made the occasion, as sin is, of showing forth redeeming grace and dying love. We should not need to be redeemed from a good thing. The whole view we have taken exhibits sin as *the greatest of all evils*,—as that but for which the Son of God need not have died, and redeeming mercy had never been displayed.

4. After all, it will be said, that the view we have taken does furnish some excuse, some apology for sin. But so the matter does not seem to us; and that the question may be fairly tested, let us apply it to some of those cases in which we know that God has overruled particular acts of sin for good. The murderers of our Lord, for example; does it furnish any excuse for them, that God made their sin the occasion of so much blessing to the world? Who thanks the Jews, or the Romans, for what they did in this matter? Who does not see that they were precisely as guilty and as deserving of punishment, as though no good had resulted from their murderous deed? And who thanks the persecutors of the Pilgrims for driving them out of England, and compelling them to transport themselves to this Western world?

Who thanks the emissaries of Charles II. for shutting up John Bunyan in Bedford jail, where he had leisure, which otherwise he never would have taken, for composing his immortal Pilgrim's Progress? And so of every other case. The fact that God will bring good out of all the evil which he permits furnishes not the shadow of an apology for such evil. No thanks in any case to the evil-doer, but all praise to that wonder-working providence of God, which can defeat the cruel designs of his enemies, and turn that into a blessing which they intended for a curse.

Inferences.

1. It follows from this discussion, that the great plan of providence which God formed in eternity, and which he is carrying into effect in time, is *the best conceivable.* Some persons think it the best one *practicable*, but not the best conceivable. God can conceive of something a great deal better,—of a plan involving all the good of the present system, with none of its evils; but he did not adopt it for the very good reason that he could not accomplish it. But we hold that the present system of providence and grace, which God in eternity adopted, and which he is carrying into effect,—including the existence of sin and redemption,—is the best which infinite wisdom could conceive; involving the brightest and most glorious exhibition of all the divine perfections and attributes, and the highest good of the intelligent universe as a whole. It is thought that God can conceive of a better system than the present, since he can conceive of one that shall embrace all the good of the existing system with none of its evils. But how can God conceive of all the blessings flowing from redemption, and yet there be no redemption? And certainly there could be no redemption had there been no sin to atone for,—no sinners to redeem.

2. If the present system is the best, on the whole, which infinite wisdom could conceive or devise, then we may suppose that *God rests in it with entire satisfaction.* To be sure it involves evils many and great; but then these are but *incidental evils*,—incidental in some way to the greatest good. It involves much which, in itself considered, a benevolent God cannot contemplate

without pain ; but then this pain, whatever it may be, is no more than *incidental* pain,—incidental in some way to his own highest happiness. And this is the only view of the case which is at all consistent with the infinite blessedness of the Supreme Being. To suppose him to be under the dreadful necessity of seeing and suffering a vast amount of evil which he is unable to prevent, and of doing for the universe, not the best that he would, but only the best that he can, is obviously degrading to the Supreme Being, and is not at all consistent with that infinite and eternal blessedness which is ascribed to him in the Scriptures.

LECTURE XXXI.

MAN BEFORE THE FALL.

The Scriptures inform us that, after the creation of the world and its inferior inhabitants, *man* was made in the image of God, —innocent and happy, perfect in his kind, and blessed with the smiles of indulgent Heaven. He soon fell from his happy state, and forfeited the divine favor; but it will be necessary to a right understanding of some connected truths, to inquire into his situation previous to the fall. And it may be observed,—

1. That, previous to the fall, man had the *same faculties*, both of body and mind, that he now has. This is evident, since otherwise he would not have been a *man*. He would not have possessed human nature, or have been a human being. The race to which we now belong is a race of *men*, and possesses all the faculties of men. If Adam possessed other or different faculties he must have belonged to some other race of creatures. Men now have all the faculties which are necessary to constitute them *moral agents*, and Adam, in his best estate, needed no more. We cannot conceive that other faculties, in *kind*, would have been of the least service to him, even if they had been bestowed. Men now have noble mental faculties,—faculties corresponding in kind, to those of their Creator; so that in respect to faculties they may still be said to bear his image. (See Gen. ix. 6; 1 Cor. xi. 7.) Men have lost the *moral* image of God, but they are represented as retaining that *natural* divine image in which they were at first created. They have ceased to be holy like God,—have ceased to use their faculties as God uses his; but they have not lost any of their faculties by the fall. They still possess the same *natural ability* to know and do their duty,—the same free responsible agency, which they did before.

We do not say that the faculties of man are in the same *state* now that they were before the fall, or the same that they would have been in if he had never fallen. Without doubt, they are deteriorated, under the blighting and stupefying influence of sin. The understanding is enfeebled and darkened; the sensibilities are weakened and deranged; conscience has, in a measure, lost its power. Our faculties may have been all of them more or less impaired. Still, it does not appear that any of them have been lost. In number and kind they remain the same that they were in Paradise.

2. Previous to the fall, Adam was favored with all the *knowledge* that was necessary for him in his circumstances. He was not an angel, on the one hand, nor was he an infant or a savage, in point of knowledge, on the other. He had not acquired all his knowledge as we do, by the slow processes of experience and observation. He needed it too early to have room for that. Such knowledge as was needful for him seems to have been imparted directly by inspiration or revelation. At any rate, it was taught him by his Creator. In this way, he received a knowledge of the rudiments and the structure of language. He was made acquainted with some of the arts, and with the more necessary articles of food. He was qualified to give names to the different animals. He was instructed to dress the garden, and to keep it. He knew the difference between right and wrong; knew what was required of him, and what forbidden; and knew something as to the results both of obedience and disobedience.

3. Previous to the fall, man was a subject, as he now is, of the *Divine Government*. He was subject to *law*, and under law. Being a free moral agent, it was proper and right he should be. He was subject, without any doubt, to the great law of *love*,—a law which binds heaven and earth; which reaches to the consciences of moral beings, wherever they exist. Our first parents were subject to all those laws—sometimes called *natural*—which are enforced by reason and conscience, and do not require to be positively enjoined. They were not, indeed, in circumstances to transgress some of these laws. They could not steal or covet, since all that they saw was their own. They

could not honor their father or mother, for they had none. And persons now are not unfrequently in circumstances where they cannot transgress some divine laws. Yet this does not prove that they are not subject to them. Previous to the fall, man was subject, also, to some *positive* injunctions. He was doubtless commanded to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. He was commanded to dress the garden of Eden and to keep it. And what is of more importance for us to know, he was commanded *not* to eat of the fruit of "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," which stood in the midst of the garden. He may have been subject to other positive precepts which, in the brief history of his happy state, have not been recorded.

4. Our first parents before the fall were *perfectly holy*. They perfectly obeyed the great law of love, and every other divine command of which they had any knowledge. Their thoughts, their affections, their words, their actions, all were in perfect harmony with the dictates of conscience and the will of Heaven.

5. Their is much reason to believe that our first parents, in Paradise, were on *trial*. It seems to be a part of the settled plan of God to *try* his intelligent creatures, before fixing them in their final state. The angels were once on trial, during which a part of them remained steadfast, and a part fell. The human race in this world are now on trial; and we have good reason to believe that, before their fall, our first parents had a season of probation. Their trial was, indeed, very different from that of their posterity. We are on trial to see if we will turn from our sins. They were on trial to see if they would continue holy. The issue of our trial is, whether we shall repent and be forgiven and restored. The issue of theirs was, whether they should fall and be rejected.

If our first parents had persevered in holiness for a limited time, we have reason to believe that they would have been confirmed in holiness, and would have been immortal. Soul and body would never have been separated. They might have been translated, as Enoch was, but it is not at all likely that they would ever have died. Temporal dissolution, we know, is a fruit of sin (Rom. v. 12). But if, during their probation, our first parents transgressed any of the laws to which they were

subject, then they would lose their spiritual life, and become instantly liable to suffer the penalty of the broken law, which is *eternal death*,—the eternal destruction of soul and body in hell.

The prominence given in the narrative to the law, respecting the forbidden fruit, is probably owing to the fact that this law was first broken;—that by this the apostasy was introduced. Had Adam first broken either of the other laws of God, doubtless the same prominence would have been given to that, and the same consequences would have ensued.

6. The consequences of the trial of our first parents did not terminate with themselves. The character and condition of their posterity were in like manner involved. If they persevered in holiness to the end of their trial, their descendants would also be holy; but if they fell within the space allotted them, their posterity would commence their moral existence sinners. Such were the purposes of God respecting them, as these have since been revealed in his word, and disclosed in his providential dispensations; but whether they were revealed to our first parents at the time, may be well doubted. They knew, in the general, what God required of them. They knew with what they were threatened, in case of transgression. And for all the purposes of trial, this was enough. To have disclosed to them (if it were possible) the endless train of consequences to issue from their fall, might have defeated their trial altogether. It might have been sufficient to overwhelm them.

7. We come now to inquire into the nature of the threatening, recorded in the second chapter of Genesis: "In the day that thou eatest thereof *thou shalt surely die*." What is the death here intended? Is it temporal death, or spiritual death, or eternal death? Or does it include them all?

In replying to these questions, let it be remarked, that the *threatening* to our first parents before they fell, must not be confounded with the *consequences* of their fall. An endless train of evils has resulted from the fall, reaching not only to our first parents, but to their posterity forever. Indeed, an endless train of blessings has flowed, indirectly and consequentially, from the fall, including all the blessings of redemption. But it would be preposterous to regard all these consequences, one

way and the other, as included in the original threatening to Adam. We must distinguish therefore, as I said, between the simple threatening and the consequences of the transgression.

In order to understand the threatening referred to, we must bear in mind (what has been before stated) that our first parents in Paradise were under *law*,—*mere law*. The precepts enjoined on them were those of the law. The rewards which they enjoyed and anticipated were those of law,—dispensed to them, and to be dispensed, on the ground of law. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the threatening under consideration was one of law. In other words, our first parents were threatened, in case of transgression, with the proper *penalty* of the divine law. The passage including the threatening is parallel to those in which it is said: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The wages of sin is death." As our first parents were under a dispensation of law, they were threatened, in case of transgression, with the proper penalty of the law; the same that was inflicted on the sinning angels,—*eternal death*. This would include, of course, *spiritual* death,—a being "dead in trespasses and sins;" since none will suffer the pains of eternal death who are not in a state of spiritual death; or who, in other words, are not entirely sinful.

Most evangelical Christians regard the threatening before us as including spiritual and eternal death; and some represent it as including also temporal death. But manifestly, if it includes eternal death, it cannot include temporal death; since the two ideas are incompatible. Temporal death is a dissolution of the connection between soul and body; eternal death is the destruction of soul and body in hell. Suppose, then, eternal death to have been included in the threatening, and to have been immediately executed—as it must have been but for the intervention of the gospel—upon the transgressors. There would have been no room, in that case, for temporal death. It could not possibly have ensued. Soul and body must have gone to destruction together, and could not have been separated.

There is another consideration going to show the truth of what has been stated. Christ came into the world to redeem his people from the curse of the divine law,—that curse which

hangs over every sinner, and was denounced upon Adam in case he fell into sin. But Christ does not redeem his people from temporal death. They still suffer that. It follows that temporal death makes no part of the proper penalty of the law, —that penalty which was originally denounced upon our first parents.

Temporal death, from the very nature of it, belongs not to the dispensation of law, but to that of grace. It is indeed a bitter fruit of sin; but it is such fruit as can be tasted only under a dispensation of grace. Accordingly, the first intimation which we have in the Scriptures of temporal death is found subsequent to the promise of a Saviour. It was in connection with the great gospel promise, but subsequent to it, that God said to our first parents: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. iii. 19).

It may be objected to what has been said, that eternal death was not executed upon our first parents in the day of their transgression,—perhaps never was. But why was not eternal death immediately executed? Not because it was not threatened,— but because a dispensation of mercy supervened, and the stroke of justice was *suspended*, to make room for it. A Saviour was promised, and man, who had failed on the trial whether he would obey and be happy, was now put upon another trial; viz., whether he would repent and be forgiven, —whether he would flee to the promised Deliverer, trust in him, and be saved.

We see from what has been said that, in some respects, our state resembles that of our first parents; while, in other important respects, there is a difference. We are, as Adam was, human beings,—free, moral, accountable agents,—possessing all the faculties that he possessed,—all that are requisite in order to moral agency. We are, as Adam was, subjects of the divine government, and on probation under that government. We are subject to essentially the same law that was imposed upon Adam,—the great law of love; and are bound, as he was, to obey it. Still, our faculties are not in the same pure and perfect state with those of Adam before he fell; nor do we sustain the same relations to the divine government; nor are we placed on the same kind of trial. And though we are

subject to essentially the same law as Adam, still our foundation of hope is not the same. His hope, so long as he continued obedient, was from the law. As sinners, we have failed on this ground, and must build all our hopes upon the Saviour.

The grand difference between Adam in Paradise and his posterity, and that from which all other differences flow, is, that he was perfectly holy, while they, in their state of nature, are entirely sinful. He was the friend of God, but they are his enemies. As the friend of God, Adam in Paradise was perfectly happy; while his posterity, being sinners, are exposed to various miseries in this life, and, unless they repent and embrace the gospel, to eternal destruction in the life to come.

LECTURE XXXII.

THE TEMPTATION AND FALL OF MAN.

In our last Lecture, we considered man in his primitive, holy and happy state. He was made in the image of God, intelligent and free, a proper subject of moral government, and was placed at once under the law and the government of God. He was subject to the great law of love, and to all those outward exemplifications of it which are discoverable by the light of reason and nature. He was subject, also, to a few plain, positive precepts. He was to dress the garden of Eden, and to keep it. He was to observe and sanctify the Sabbath; and from one of the trees of the garden—the tree of knowledge of good and evil—he was to abstain entirely, under penalty of eternal death.

This injunction seems to have been laid upon our first parents, more especially for their *trial*. They were on trial to see whether they would keep *all* the commands of God, but more especially this; since this was a plain, positive command, the import of which they could not misunderstand, and the reasons of which, probably, they did not fully comprehend; so that obedience to it would be a suitable trial of their *faith* as well as of their moral strength. The result of their probation we too well know. The serpent persuaded the woman, and she persuaded her husband, to "eat of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe." Several questions arise here which demand consideration.

1. What are we to understand by *the serpent;* who is said to have beguiled Eve? Who was he? What was he? That he was an animal of the serpent kind, and not (as some have supposed) a baboon or a monkey, is indubitable. He is expressly called οφις, a *serpent*, by the Apostle Paul: "I fear lest, by any

means, as the *serpent* beguiled Eve, through his subtilty, so your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 3). He probably had other means of locomotion than what serpents now have,—feet, or wings, or perhaps both, —of which he was divested, in consequence of his assault upon our unsuspecting first parents. Still he was a species of serpent.

And yet he was not a mere serpent. He displayed an artifice, a cunning subtilty, a malice, of which no mere brute animal was ever capable. His body, his faculties, were, for the time, possessed by what the Apostle John calls "*that old serpent*, the Devil, and Satan" (Rev. xii. 9). Devils sometimes possessed the bodies of animals, as well as of men, in the time of our Saviour. A legion of them once entered into a herd of swine, who, in consequence, ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and were drowned (Luke viii. 33). That the devil was the real agent in deceiving our first mother and drawing her into sin, is evident from the nature of the case, and is implied in many Scriptures. Accordingly, the curse pronounced upon the serpent extended farther than to the literal animal. It reached to "that old serpent, the devil," and portended the victory which our Saviour was to achieve over him upon the cross.

2. Our second inquiry relates to *the speaking* of the serpent. Did he literally speak to the woman? If so, was not his speaking a miracle; and a miracle performed for a bad purpose,— that of drawing our first parents into sin? I suppose the serpent did literally speak to the woman. He held a literal conversation with her. We must suppose this, unless we regard the entire narrative as an allegory,—a supposition which the connection and many other Scriptures forbid. Nor is it certain that the speaking of Satan, through the organs of the serpent, was a proper miracle, involving (as all miracles do) a suspension of the powers and laws of nature, and a direct interposition of the power of God. The probability is, that Satan was able, by his own natural powers, to speak audibly and intelligibly through the organs of the serpent. We know that he often spoke through the *human* organs, in the time of Christ. He enabled the poor frantic demoniacs, in repeated instances, to utter truths, concerning which, of themselves, they had no knowledge. For

example, one of these demoniacs made an open profession of the Messiahship of Jesus, in advance even of his disciples and followers: "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mark i. 24). This must have been an utterance of the demon, through the organs of the possessed person. Nor have we any reason to think it a miraculous utterance. But if Satan could speak, of his own power, through the human organs, why might he not through the organs of the serpent? There is no more evidence of miracle in the latter case than in the former.

3. Our third inquiry relates to the *possibility* of our first parents falling in the manner they did. Some have thought their apostasy wholly unaccountable. "They were perfectly holy. Their propensities, feelings, and habits were all holy. They had, in fact, a holy *principle*, a holy *nature*. How, then, could temptation reach such minds? How could it overcome them?" On the supposition that our first parents had a holy nature previous to their fall,—something back of and distinct from all holy affections, and which could express itself in nothing but holy action,—I do not see how they could fall. They certainly could not, unless their holy nature was changed, and no being but their Creator was able to change it. But there is no reason to suppose that they had such a nature as this. The evidence from reason and from facts is all against it. They had all the human faculties, fully developed, in a pure and perfect state. And up to this time, they had constantly exercised their faculties in the most proper manner. Their thoughts, their affections, their words, their actions, all had been holy. And in these, all their holiness consisted. It was an *active* holiness, comprised essentially in supreme love to God, and a disinterested love to the creatures of God. In other words, it was an active and perfect *obedience* to the divine law. And all that their fall involved was, for this to be changed into active disobedience. There was no holy nature, back of and distinct from all that was active within them, requiring to be changed, but only a change in their active exercises and affections, from those which were holy to those which were sinful.

It is certain that no *good* reason can be given for the fall of our first parents. Their act of transgression was altogether

unreasonable and without excuse. Still, I have never supposed that there was anything inexplicably mysterious or unaccountable in the matter. Their fall, I think, may be explained, as well as many other wicked things which have been transacted in the world.

Being free moral agents, our first parents must have had the *susceptibilities* appropriate to such agents. They must have been susceptible to motive influence, both to good and evil, to the right and the wrong. Such susceptibilities imply nothing sinful in the person possessing them, but only that, as a moral agent, he is *capable* of doing wrong. Our Saviour must have had them, else he could not have been tempted any way. Our first parents must have had them, else they could have had no trial at all. Indeed, every moral agent has them, else he could not be a moral agent, and responsibility would cease.

But our first parents were not only moral agents, and had the susceptibilities of such agents; they were also on *probation* or *trial*. Hence it was necessary that they should have something to try them. For a state of trial in which there was nothing to try them would be just no trial at all. Being susceptible to motive influences, both to good and to evil, it was involved in their very probation that such motives should be placed before them. In order that they might be, the tempter was permitted to enter the garden. Embodied in the wily serpent, he approaches the woman, whom he finds alone somewhere near the forbidden tree, and enters into conversation with her. Perhaps she had heard him speak before, so that the fact of his speaking did not surprise her. "Yea, hath God said that ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? Is it possible that he is dealing thus hardly with you, and thus arbitrarily interdicting your freedom?" And the woman said: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of this one tree, which stands here in the midst of the garden, God hath said that ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." But the serpent said unto the woman, "Ye shall not surely die. No such evil is to be apprehended. I have often eaten of it, and I am not dead, or injured, but am the rather benefited. It would seem as though God was jealous of you. He is arbitra-

rily restraining you, to your hurt. For he doth know that in the day that ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, as mine are, and ye shall become as very gods, knowing good and evil."

In this artful address, we see how the serpent appeals to the moral susceptibilities of the woman, and plies his motive influence upon her. First of all, he undertakes to shake her confidence in God, and weaken her sense of obligation to him; that so the motives to disobedience may find little or no resistance. Then he flatly lies to the unsuspecting woman. He blinds and deceives her as to the dreaded consequences of trangression. Next, he makes his appeal to her senses. "See, how beautiful this fruit is, and how delicious to the taste?" He appeals also to her natural curiosity, and to her desire of knowledge and of happiness,—all of them powerful principles of action; and by all he urges her to make the experiment; assuring her that it can do her no harm, but good; that it will make her instantly more wise and happy. The confiding, inexperienced creature is, as Paul expresses it, "deceived" (1 Tim. ii. 14). She believes the tempter rather than God. He so presents and urges the motives to transgression, that they predominate over all other influences, and she yields. She puts forth her hand—she takes —she eats. The deed is done; the serpent's malice is satiated; and he retires from the scene.

Eve soon finds her husband, and tells him what she has done. She tells him how delicious the fruit is, and how desirable to make one wise. She assures him, from her own experience, that there is no danger of death, and urges him, by all the regard which he ought to have for his own good, and by all the love which he bears to her, to take and eat likewise. Nor is it so very strange that her persuasions prevailed with him. For, in addition to all the motives which had prevailed with her, there was the additional one of conjugal affection. Adam could not be separated from his beloved Eve. He preferred to be united with her even in transgression. If Eve must die, he chose to die with her. He took the forbidden fruit from her hand, and did as she required.

That our first parents acted unreasonably and wickedly in all this, there can be no doubt. They committed a great and dread-

ful sin. But that there was anything mysterious or inexplicable in it, I see no reason to believe. Their fall may be accounted for on philosophical principles, as easily as most of the wickedness which is perpetrated among men.

Having followed our first parents through their original trial and their fall, we come now to contemplate some of the more immediate *consequences* of their sin. Their eyes were soon opened, but in a way which they did not expect. They were opened to their own sin, and shame, and guilt. They had come to a knowledge of good and evil, in a sense which they never felt before. They stood guilty and condemned, without refuge or hope, expecting the wrath and curse of their Creator. They were afraid to meet an offended God, and so they went and hid themselves among the trees of the garden.

But vain is their attempt to hide themselves from God. He soon finds them, summons them forth, and calls them to a strict account. They can offer no sufficient excuse, and, instead of taking the blame to themselves, they endeavor to shuffle it off upon others. The man blames the woman, and the woman the serpent.

The several curses are now pronounced; and, first, upon the *serpent*. "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field. Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust thou shalt eat all the days of thy life." Thus far the curse seems to rest upon the literal serpent. If he had legs or wings before, they were now taken from him, and he was doomed henceforth to creep upon his belly, and lick the dust.[1] The remainder of the curse upon the serpent had respect more particularly to "that old serpent, the devil," whose agency was chiefly concerned in the temptation. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." We have here, in the curse upon the serpent, the first dawn of hope for the fallen human pair. The language carries with it

[1] It is remarkable, that though fossil remains of numerous species of serpents have come down to us from the pre-adamite earth, not one, so far as I recollect, has been found which had not fins, or wings, or legs, or, in some instances, all three. None went on their belly in the dust, like the generality of serpents since the fall.

an assurance that they were to have a respite from death; that they should live to have a seed; and that a descendant of the woman should utterly vanquish the old serpent, and put an end to his usurped dominion over man. All this, I hardly need say, was gloriously fulfilled in that great seed of the woman, the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan bruised his heel, when he brought him to the cross; but by dying on the cross he utterly vanquished Satan, and defeated all his diabolical designs. "Through death, he destroyed him which had the power of death; that is, the devil" (Heb. ii. 14).

The curse upon the *woman* has rested heavily upon every daughter of Eve from that time to the present. In sorrow and pain has she brought forth her children. Her desire has been unto her husband, and he has ruled over her. The degradation of woman, and her sufferings from the other sex, more especially in those parts of the world not blessed with the light of revealed truth, have been dreadful. She has not been *punished for* the sin of her first mother, but her sufferings *in consequence* of it have been long and dismal.

The curse upon the *man* includes two things. First, a curse upon the ground, involving the necessity of hard and wasting labor on his part, in order to procure a subsistence from it. And, secondly, temporal dissolution or death. "And unto Adam God said: Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken. For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The curse upon the ground involved some change in regard to its natural productions. What this change was, precisely, and how it was produced, we cannot tell. As much as this, however, may be said: That whereas the spontaneous productions of the earth before the fall were nutritious and useful, so that a sustenance was easily procured, the case was very different afterwards. The ground then brought forth spontaneously the thorn and the thistle, the noxious weed and herb; while those productions most necessary for the sustenance and use of man could be pro-

cured only by toil and labor. Certainly we find this to be the case now; and all the generations of men, from Adam downward, have found the same. In the sweat of their face they have been constrained to eat their bread. Such, we have reason to know, was not the original order of things. It has been entailed upon us in consequence of sin.

I have said that a part of the curse pronounced upon Adam was temporal death. In the verses above read, we have the first mention of temporal dissolution which occurs in the Bible. The death *threatened* to Adam, in case he transgressed, I endeavored to show in my last Lecture, was not temporal death. It was rather the proper penalty of the law, which is eternal death. The execution of this penalty, as I said, was for a time suspended, in order to make room for a dispensation of grace. The dispensation of grace had now been opened and entered upon. A seed of the woman had been promised, who should bruise the serpent's head. Fallen man may be saved, if he will repent and trust in the promised Saviour; and consequently he must have *a space for repentance.* To afford him such a space, the execution of the incurred penalty of the law is, for the time, suspended. Man has the offer of salvation through a Redeemer. If the offer is accepted in time, the incurred penalty is not only suspended, but *remitted.* The transgressor is forgiven, and received back into the favor and the love of God. But if the gracious offer is not accepted in time; if it is neglected and rejected; then the suspended penalty comes down with new aggravations upon the head of the transgressor. He has now not only broken the law of God, but trodden under foot his Son, and done despite to the Spirit of his grace.

Upon such a probation as this were Adam and Eve placed immediately upon the revelation of a Saviour. Upon such a probation are we all placed during our continuance in the present life. Of this probation of grace, temporal dissolution is the proper termination. When God has waited to be gracious long enough, and can consistently wait no longer, he breaks the brittle thread of life, and turns back the body to the dust from which it was taken. This, then, is the proper significance of temporal death,—to terminate the probation of fallen man, and settle the

question whether he is to rise or sink, be happy or miserable, forever. Though not the proper penalty of the law, it is yet a fruit and consequence of sin; but such a consequence as can be realized only under a dispensation of grace.[1] Hence, it was not till the dispensation of grace had opened, and a Saviour had been promised, that we first hear of temporal death in the Bible.

And this accounts for what follows in the closing part of the third chapter of Genesis: "The Lord God drove out the man from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life," lest doomed man "should put forth his hand and also take of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." The tree of life was not a forbidden tree. Our first parents had free access to it during the period of their innocency. Its use seems to have been to remove from them all the causes of disease and death, and preserve them in perpetual maturity and health, till they were prepared to be transferred to some higher sphere. But fallen man is now doomed to temporal dissolution. His body must die and return to the dust. And yet this catastrophe can never overtake him if he has free access, as formerly, to the tree of life. He will eat it, and never die. Hence, he must be driven out of the garden of Eden, and kept out. He must be sternly kept back from the tree of life, else he will put forth his hand and eat of it, and live forever.

Other and more serious consequences of the fall of man will be considered in the following Lectures.

[1] The same is true of all the curses at this time pronounced upon the man and the woman, and through them upon the entire human race,—*bitter consequences of sin*,—but such as can be realized only while the execution of the threatened penalty is suspended, and man is on a dispensation of grace.

LECTURE XXXIII.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL, DEPRAVITY, ETC.

In my last Lecture we considered the temptation and fall of our first parents, and some of the more immediate consequences to them and their posterity. The ground brought forth to Adam the thorn and the thistle, and so it has done to all his descendants. He eat his bread in the sweat of his face, and so have they. He ended his probation in the dust, and so do they. The curse of Eve, too, has descended to all her daughters. They, like their first mother, bring forth their offspring in travail and pain.

But the consequences of Adam's sin have come down to his posterity in a more fearful sense than all this. They are *sinners* in consequence of his sin. Like him, they are depraved, corrupted creatures, and are, "by nature, the children of wrath."

The subject now before us is human depravity. In discussing it, let us consider,—

I. Its *universality*.

II. Its *totality* or *entireness*, so far as our moral affections are concerned. And,

III. Its *naturalness*, as resulting from the sin and fall of our first parents.

That the depravity of man is *universal*, extending to the entire race, is proved by the direct assertions of Scripture. In justification of this statement, I need only refer to the argument of Paul, contained in the first three chapters of his Epistle to the Romans. In the first chapter he sets forth the character of the *heathen* or *Gentile* nations. "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, back-

biters, haters of God; despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. i. 29–32).

Such, then, was the Gentile world as the Apostle Paul had seen it and known it. And now, turning to the Jews, he asks: "Are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that *they are all under sin*. As it is written, *There is none righteous, no, not one.* There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; *there is none that doeth good, no, not one.* Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. iii. 9–18). In these verses, we have the testimony of an inspired apostle, as to the characters of both Jews and Gentiles,—embracing the whole human race. Yea, more, we have the testimony of God himself as to the corruption and wickedness of them all. "*There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*"

These direct assertions of Scripture, as to the universal depravity of man, are confirmed by various doctrinal implications. As much as this is implied in the doctrine of a *universal atonement*, or that Christ "gave himself a ransom *for all*" (1 Tim. ii. 6). Why should he give himself a ransom for all, if all were not sinners? "We thus judge," says Paul, "that if one died for all, then were *all dead*,"—"dead in trespasses and sins" (2 Cor. v. 14).

Consider also the universal necessity of *regeneration*. "Verily, verily I say unto you, except a man"—*any man*—"be born

again,—be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But why must all who are born into this world be born again of the Spirit, in order to see the kingdom of God, except that "that which is born of the flesh is *flesh;*" or, in other words, that all men are by nature sinners?

Again: the Apostle Paul assures us that "by the deeds of the law shall no man living be justified" (Rom. iii. 20). And why is it impossible for any man to be justified by the deeds of the law, except that all men have broken the law, and that, whether "Jews or Gentiles, all are under sin"?

Still again: the apostle represents temporal death as a consequence of sin, and makes the latter as universal as the former. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death hath passed upon all men, for that *all have sinned*" (Rom. v. 12).

It will be seen from these statements, that the universal depravity of men rests not on a few insulated passages of Scripture, but is implied, included, in most of the great facts and doctrines of the Bible. It can never be set aside, unless these doctrines are set aside, and with them the whole Bible is abandoned.

And what is so abundantly taught in the Scriptures is confirmed by all other appropriate evidence. It is confirmed by *universal observation*. If all men are not sinners, then there are, and there have been, some spotlessly perfect human beings. But where are they? In what nook or corner of the wide earth have they been found? The great continents of our globe and the islands of the sea have now been generally explored. There is very little *terra incognita* remaining. Human beings have been sought out, wherever they exist. If there are those on the earth who are free from the taint and pollution of sin, it would seem as though they must long ago have been discovered. And yet no such discovery has been made. When the Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there be any that understand and seek after God; he is constrained to say now, as he did in former ages: "They are all gone aside; they are together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. xiv. 3).

But without stopping to search for perfection, let us look at the characters of human beings, as these are exhibited before our eyes. And to begin with little children: How early do they exhibit the most affecting proofs of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts! In the very morning of life we find them, not the little innocents which they are sometimes called, but proud, envious, covetous, vain, deceitful, fretful, and revengeful. They are selfish and contentious among themselves, ungrateful and disobedient to their parents, restive under the most salutary restraints, and resolved to pursue their own evil ways. What a task is it to rear a single family, or to train up even one child, to holiness or virtue!

And, as we turn from childhood to those of riper years, the same marks of corruption and iniquity meet us. Wherever human beings exist they are found to be sensual, selfish, contentious, ambitious, grasping for dominion, and ever ready to trample on the immunities one of another. What, in general, are the laws of men, but so many efforts—too often vain—to restrain and punish human wickedness? And what are our courts, but tribunals for adjusting the ever-recurring brawls and controversies with which the earth is disgraced? And what mean the various contrivances to which men resort to protect themselves and their property from violence, to prevent the mischiefs of fraud and compel dishonesty to fulfil its engagements, except on the supposition that this is a depraved and guilty world? In a world of holiness and purity such contrivances would not be needed, and would not be known.

The *history* of the earth is little more than a history of war and carnage, intrigues and crimes. The strifes of kings, the rise and the ruin of nations, the exploits of conquerors in their thirst for blood, make up almost the whole of it. The *pleasures* of men, too, are, for the most part, guilty pleasures,—appropriately denominated the pleasures of sin. And even the *religions* which have prevailed chiefly in the earth may be adduced in proof of its depravity. They show the truth of Paul's declaration, that when men knew God,—or had the means of knowing him,—they did not like to retain him in their knowledge, but stupidly "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into

images made like to corruptible men, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things" (Rom. i. 23).

Such, then, is the testimony of universal *observation*, as to the prevailing wickedness of men,—a testimony which might be indefinitely extended, and which, the farther it was pursued, would be the more conclusive. But we turn from it to consult, for a moment, the *experience*, the *consciousness* of individuals. Where shall the man be found whose conscience has never once reproached him for wrong-doing; who has had no painful forebodings as to his future account and state; who would dare go into his closet, and there protest before his Maker that he had never sinned? The truth is, men are conscious, universally, that they are sinners; they *know* that they are; and that they need cleansing, purification, pardon, in order that they may meet God in peace. And all this is evident in the various expedients to which they resort,—costly sacrifices, painful penances, expiations, and ablutions,—in the vain hope of making some amends for their sins, and appeasing the anger of their deities.

But I cannot say more under the head of *universal* depravity; though it would be easy to write volumes. He who would deny that mankind are a depraved and sinful race must set at naught, not only the testimony of Scripture, but also that of his own senses and consciousness, of universal observation and experience. He must be prepared to deny the most obvious conclusions and the plainest facts. In short, his denial would be but another proof of that depravity which it was intended to refute.

But *how sinful are men* in their natural state? To what *extent* are they corrupted and defiled? These questions will lead us still farther into the painful subject before us. They will lead us to treat—as proposed under our second head—of the *totality*, the *entireness* of human depravity, so far as our moral affections are concerned.

This subject of *total depravity*, as it is sometimes called, requires to be explained as well as proved. We wish to know what is implied in it, and what not, that so false impressions

may be removed, and we may be able to look at it in a proper light.

Total depravity, then, does not imply that every man in his natural state is *as bad as he can be*. This is often alleged by those who reject the doctrine; but the objection is not true,—certainly not in the sense in which it would be commonly understood. Most sinners have the natural ability to be more flagrantly wicked than they are, to indulge worse thoughts and feelings, to say and do worse things; and the contrary is not implied in the fact of their entire depravity.

Nor does this doctrine imply, as is sometimes said, that men are totally *disabled* by the fall, and rendered *incapable* of doing their duty. So far from this, the doctrine really implies the contrary. Men must be capable of doing right, or they would not be capable of doing wrong. They must be free moral agents, capable of loving and hating, choosing and refusing, doing their duty and neglecting it, or they would not be totally depraved, or in a moral sense depraved at all.

Nor does total depravity imply that the subjects of it are uniformly *vicious*. Here is another mistake into which the opposers of the doctrine very often fall. They insist that a totally depraved character must be a flagrantly vicious one; and because unregenerate men are not all of them profane swearers, Sabbath-breakers, adulterers, thieves, and liars, and do not perpetrate these abominations all the time, they insist that they are not totally depraved. But let such persons remember that human depravity has its seat in *the heart*, and not in the outward life; that the vices of men are appropriate fruits of it, but not its only fruits; and that, although selfishness exhibits itself in various ways, some fairer and some fouler, it is still selfishness at bottom, and as such is an abomination in the sight of God. A totally selfish person is a totally sinful one, in whatever dress the indwelling iniquity may show itself,—whatever forms of external beauty or deformity it may chance to put on.

Again: total depravity does not imply that the subjects of it have no amiable *natural affections*, such as parental, conjugal, and filial love; emotions of sympathy and pity, etc. Here is

another ground of objection to the doctrine before us. Its opposers tell us how tenderly impenitent parents love their children, and children their parents; how pitiful they are to objects in distress, and how ready to make sacrifices for their relief; and then demand, with an air triumph, whether there is not something good in all this, and whether such persons can be entirely sinful. In reply, we admit the facts on which the objection is based; viz., that impenitent persons are not destitute of kindly natural affections, but often possess them in a high degree. But we insist, at the same time, that this fact is not at all inconsistent with the idea of their entire sinfulness. For what are these kindly natural affections? They belong to the *sensibilities*, and not to the *will*. They are powerful incentives to action, but not moral action. They require to be wisely regulated and controlled, but in themselves are neither sinful nor holy. They are possessed by the worst of men, as well as the best. They are possessed in great vigor even by the brutes. To be destitute of them would, indeed, imply great depravity; since it could only be by such depravity that they were blunted and destroyed. But the possession of them even in high degrees, is not at all inconsistent with an entire alienation of the heart from God.

Still again: total depravity does not imply that the subjects of it have no amiable *social affections*,—those which go to render them good members of society. They may possess love of country, natural friendship, honor, honesty, kind, obliging dispositions, and many things of this sort, and yet have no true, disinterested love to God or man, and nothing which partakes of the nature of holiness. These social affections are many of them mere *feelings*, *instincts*, which fall into the same class with the natural affections. Others of them are but outward modifications of selfishness. Were all that is selfish to be sifted, separated from the patriotism, the humanity, the friendships, the seeming virtues of social life, God only knows how little would remain. The residuum, it may be feared, would be very small.

Farther: total depravity does not imply that the subjects of it may not act to some extent, and in the looser sense of the term,

conscientiously. Natural men have consciences, like other men. They may have tender consciences. They may act very considerably under the influence of their consciences, and yet not be truly holy. Their consciences may be so strangely perverted as to lead them—under the impression that they are doing right—to the perpetration of great wickedness. This was the case with Paul, in persecuting the church. Or other and baser feelings—such as pride, passion, malice, and self-will—may mingle with the promptings of a misguided conscience, and essentially corrupt it. Or persons may consult and obey their consciences but a little way, leaving out of the account those internal principles from which holiness and sin alone proceed. Thus, a child may act conscientiously in reading his Bible and saying his prayers, without stopping to consider with what feelings of heart these outward actions are performed. And older persons may act conscientiously in going to meeting, supporting the gospel, paying their debts, giving to the poor, and doing various other things, after the same manner.

I remark again, that total depravity does not imply that the subjects of it may not think themselves, and be thought by others, to be *very religious*. Simon, the sorcerer, for a time appeared very religious. Without doubt, he was regarded as a remarkable instance of converting grace. But he had neither part nor lot in the matter, because *his heart* was not right in the sight of God. There is in the world a vast amount of false, spurious, selfish, counterfeit religion, passed off under the semblance of true religion, the possession of which, so far from being inconsistent with total depravity, is but one of the forms in which this depravity is manifested.

We have thus seen, under several particulars, what total depravity does not imply; and, in discussing these particulars, have removed nearly all the objections which are commonly urged against it. It cannot be said of the doctrine we advocate, that it implies that unrenewed men are as bad as they can be; or that they have no ability or capacity to do their duty; or that they are of necessity flagrantly vicious; or that they have no amiable natural or social affections; or that they may not act, in some sense, conscientiously; or seem to themselves and

to others to be religious. The doctrine we hold implies none of these, and of course they cannot be urged as objections against it.

The question then arises, *What is this doctrine of total depravity? How much does it imply? What is the belief of Orthodox Christians in regard to it?* To this I answer: the advocates of total depravity believe, and this is all they believe, that the heart of man, in his natural state, is *without holiness*, and *entirely under the dominion of sin*. He is totally depraved, *so far as his moral affections are concerned*. In other words, *his moral exercises and affections are sinful*. He is wholly alienated from God. He begins to sin as soon as he begins to live and act, and he continues to sin without intermission or cessation, until his heart is renewed by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit. This is total depravity;—a doctrine which is plainly taught in the Bible, and which is verified in the experience and observation of all good men.

1. Total depravity is taught in the Bible. It is taught in those passages in which the wicked are represented as *blind* and *deaf* and *dead*. "Hear, ye deaf, and look, ye blind, that ye may see" (Is. xlii. 18). "You hath he quickened, who *were dead* in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1). As the blind are destitute of sight, and the deaf of hearing, and the dead of life, so the wicked are here represented as destitute of holiness, or spiritual life. Sinners are also represented, in the Bible, as *un*just, *un*righteous, *un*godly, *un*holy, *un*believing, etc., terms necessarily implying that those to whom they are applied are *without holiness*, and of course under the dominion of sin. It is further said in the Scriptures that "the imagination and thought of man's heart is *only evil* and *that continually;*" that "the heart of the sons of men is *full of evil*," and "*fully set in them to do evil;*" that it is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" that "the carnal mind is enmity against God," and that in it "dwelleth *no good* thing;"—expressions implying, if the language means anything, that the natural heart of man is entirely sinful.

2. This doctrine, like that of universal depravity, is taught, not only in the direct language of Scripture, but by *necessary*

doctrinal implications. Let us look again at the doctrine of regeneration. Regeneration is the *commencement* of a new and spiritual life in the soul. It is the *commencement* of holy exercises and affections in the heart. The subject of this change becomes at once a *new creature.* Old things pass away with him, and all things become spiritually new. But if this is a just view of regeneration, then manifestly, previous to it, there is *no* spiritual life in the soul. There are *no* holy exercises in the heart. All its emotions and affections must be sinful. If men had some holiness in their natural state, they might need reformation, but not regeneration. They might need to improve upon their native good qualities, but not to be born again.

Look also at the marked distinction, everywhere recognized in the Scriptures between the *righteous and the wicked.* It is impossible to make this distinction, and show in what it consists, if we deny the doctrine of total depravity. If the sinner has *some* holiness previous to regeneration; if his character is a mixed one, partly holy and partly sinful; then how does he differ from the believer? The true Christian, in this life, is not perfectly holy. He does not do as well as he ought, or as well as he can. The most that can be said of him is that he has *some* right affections,—that he has at least drawn the breath of spiritual life. And now, if the sinner, too, has some right affections, some spiritual life, where is the mighty difference between the two classes? Where is there any difference? Manifestly, on this ground, the distinction so constantly recognized in Scripture between the righteous and the wicked, the saint and the sinner, is obliterated. It no longer exists.

3. The doctrine of the entire sinfulness of the natural heart is verified in the *experience* of all good men. Every true Christian acknowledges this truth. He acknowledges it as the result of his own experience. He has seen and felt it to be true in his own heart; and every other man, if he properly understood the subject, would see and feel the same. The law of God requires that we love him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and that we love our neighbor as ourselves. To obey this law is to be holy. To fail of obeying it, or (which is the same) to transgress it, is to be sinful. And now who does not know that

he has failed of yielding a strict obedience to this law continually? What unrenewed person, who reflects at all, will not see and confess that he has never fulfilled it in a single instance?

Those who do not love God with all the heart, love themselves and the world with all their heart. Those who do not love their neighbor as themselves, love themselves more than their neighbor. In other words, they are selfish. And what sinner, who looks closely into his own heart, can fail to see that this is the actual state of it? He *is* selfish. He loves himself; he labors for himself; he seeks his own supposed interest in preference to any other object. Even his best performances he will perceive are the result of selfishness, and, of course, are not acceptable in the sight of God.

4. The decisions of Scripture and the results of experience, on this subject, are confirmed by *observation*. How do we see men living and acting in the world around us? Passing over the multiform vices and corruptions of the world,—its idolatries, its blasphemies, its wars, its murders, its adulteries, its frauds, its falsehoods, its unnatural and guilty pleasures,—let us look only at the fairer aspects of society. And what are these? Some, to be sure, who give no evidence of piety, are not palpably deficient in the performance of relative and social duties. They are good parents, good children, good neighbors, citizens, and friends. But do they love God with all the heart, and their fellow-creatures as themselves? Do they *appear* to do this? Do they *profess* to do it? On the contrary, are they not universally and *manifestly* selfish?

How early and how clearly do we discover selfishness in children! Little children are incapable of much disguise. They commonly speak and act out their real feelings. And how obviously they act out feelings of selfishness! For what do they cry, but that self may be gratified? And for what are they pleased, but that self is gratified? And for what do they contend one with another, but to get or to keep some good to themselves? And for what are they angry and revengeful, but to resent some injury supposed to be inflicted on the same darling object?

And those feelings of selfishness which children act out without disguise, men labor to disguise in vain. Men generally are ashamed of them, and try to conceal them; but the effort is wholly unsuccessful. The truth oozes out through so many crevices, as to leave no doubt as to the quality of what is within. Whether in childhood or manhood, whether among savage or civilized nations, selfishness is obviously the grand moving spring of human conduct. Men plan and execute, they bustle and labor, for themselves. For this the student studies, and the husbandman tills the earth, and the mechanic visits his shop, and the merchant his warehouse, and the seaman traverses the mighty deep, and all the powers of nature are pressed into the service of man. Self is the rallying point with each individual. Self is the ruling motive with all,—unless it be with a very few; and these are looked upon by the mass of men as perfect anomalies and mysteries, for whose actions it is impossible to give any rational account. It is thought the strangest thing on earth that persons should be willing to labor, as Paul did, and as the Saviour did, without a governing regard to their own private interests.

Thus clearly does *observation*, as well as experience, testify to the entire selfishness of natural, unrenewed men. But, certainly, men are as sinful as they are selfish; for all selfishness is sin. Yea, more, it is the very *quintessence* of sin, out of which every form of sin proceeds, and of which it partakes. Who, then, can deny that mankind, in a state of nature, are entirely sinful? Who can be ignorant or insensible of this humiliating fact, in his own experience?

The importance of the doctrine considered in this Lecture—the universal and entire depravity of unrenewed men—can hardly be overestimated. It deserves, perhaps, more than any other, to be regarded as a *fundamental* doctrine. Let a person believe and feel that he is a totally depraved and ruined sinner, and he will see that he needs a divine Saviour and Sanctifier, an infinite atonement, and regeneration by the special operations of the Holy Spirit. But let him take the opposite course, reject this great doctrine, and settle down upon the conclusion that he is naturally good,—as good almost as he needs to be or wishes

to be—and what will the result be upon his general belief and character? He now feels in no particular need of a divine Saviour, and will not long believe that such a Saviour has been provided. He feels no need of an atonement, and will soon deny that an atonement has been made. He sees no necessity of a change of heart, and doubts whether such a change is ever experienced. He feels in no need of the sanctifying operations of the Holy Ghost, and does not know that there is any Holy Ghost. He feels in no danger of eternal punishment, and questions whether such a punishment will ever be inflicted. He begins with doubting his own depravity, and ends in becoming a thorough-going liberalist, sceptic, and infidel.

This doctrine of total depravity is to be assumed as a first principle, not only in the preaching of ministers, and in a system of theology, but in all systems of *political economy* or of *popular education*. And here is a point in regard to which most of the works which have been written on these subjects have seemed to me to be erroneous and defective. They proceed upon the principle that man is naturally a virtuous being; warped in some degree from the path of rectitude, but always ready to return to it; perverted by bad instructions and examples, but meaning well on the whole, and quite willing to be set right, and kept there. He needs to be reformed, but not renewed; to be improved and polished, but not to be born again. I hardly need say that such systems should be discarded by Christians, as based upon false views of human nature, and tending to blind, deceive, and injure all who embrace them.

LECTURE XXXIV.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL. NATURAL DEPRAVITY.

In treating the subject of depravity, it was proposed to consider,—

I. Its *universality*.

II. Its *totality* or *entireness*, so far as our moral affections are concerned. And,

III. Its *naturalness*, as resulting from the sin and fall of our first parents.

The two first of these particulars have been already discussed. To the third, your attention will now be directed. That our depravity is *natural* to us, growing somehow out of our very nature, may be inferred from what has been already said. We have proved that this depravity is universal, extending to all the race; and that it uniformly shows itself in very early life. Now in what way are these facts to be accounted for, but by supposing that it has its foundation in the nature of fallen man? Certainly, any other attribute or quality belonging to the race universally, and showing itself in the very morning of our days, would be pronounced a natural quality. No other conclusion would be thought of in regard to it.

That our depravity is natural to us is also taught in the Scriptures. Our Saviour says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (John iii. 6). The word flesh, in the former part of this verse, is used in two different senses; as the word spirit is in the latter part. To be born of the flesh is simply to be born in the natural way. To *be flesh*, in the sense of our Saviour, is to be *fleshly*, *carnal*, *sinful* in our affections. The sense of the passage is therefore, this: All that are born into the world—in other words, *all*

men—are carnal in their affections,—carnal on account of their being born,—or (which is the same) carnal *by nature*,—and need to be born again of the Holy Spirit, in order to see the kingdom of God..

And this is parallel with a passage in the writings of Paul. "And were *by nature* the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. iii. 2). To be a child of wrath is to be a sinner; and such, the apostle assures us, we are all *by nature*. Whatever else this passage may teach, it surely teaches as much as this, that sin is *natural* to us. There is a foundation for it, somehow, in our nature.

The same is taught more specifically by the apostle, in other passages. in which he represents our sins as connected in some way with that of Adam, from whom we are naturally descended. "As by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift; for if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. v. 12–19).

Without going into a full interpretation of these several passages, it is enough for our present purpose to say that the connection of our sin with that of Adam is here repeatedly and expressly indicated. "*By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.*" My principal object, at present, is to inquire into the nature of this connection, and to examine briefly some of the theories which have been proposed respecting it.

1. It has been said that all mankind *existed in Adam*, or were *constituted one with him*, so that they "sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression." This was the opinion of

President Edwards, and of many of the older Calvinistic divines.[1] But to this view of the case there are insuperable objections. In the first place, it would be hard to prove, in opposition to reason and common sense, that all men did actually exist in Adam. Or, if they did have a kind of seminal existence in him, did they exist as moral agents,—free, thinking, active beings, and capable of committing sin? Who believes as much as this?

But suppose we did exist in Adam, and participated in his first sin; why not, for the same reason, in all his sins? Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years, and without doubt committed a great many sins; and if we so existed in him as to be guilty of his first sin, why not, for the same reason, guilty of them all? And why not, for the same reason, guilty of all the sins of all our progenitors from Adam downward; since we have as much existed in the loins of all as we ever did in those of Adam? No man, since Adam, ever felt guilty, or condemned in conscience, for eating the forbidden fruit; and if any of his descendants are punished for eating it, I think they will have good reason to complain. For the truth is, they did not eat it. They did not so exist in Adam as to have any active concern in that transaction.

2. It has been supposed, that although the posterity of Adam were not personally concerned in his first sin, still, this sin is so *imputed*, *transferred*, *put over* to them, as actually to become theirs. But to this it is enough to reply that sin is not transferable property. It is strictly a personal thing. My sin can never become another man's, nor another man's mine. The imputation of sin, spoken of in the Bible, does not imply a transfer of

[1] See *Treatise on Original Sin*, Part iv. chap. 3. Musculus says: "That all men existing in Adam's loins, *did sin*, in his actual sin." Junius says: "The sin of Adam was not a personal one, but was the sin of the whole human race; since the race was included in his loins, and *sinned in him*." Beza says: "There are three things which make man guilty before God. 1. The fact that *we all sinned in the first man*. 2. The corruption which is in punishment of that sin; and 3. Our own actual transgressions." Strackius says: "All the descendants of Adam assuredly *sinned in his loins*, and revolted from God to the devil." Molinæus says: "*We sinned in Adam*, and in him we *willed* this depravation." Hunnius teaches, that "as the first sin was committed voluntarily by Adam, so also *it was committed voluntarily by us all;* and so all descending from him are born voluntary transgressors."

sin. We may and do suffer in many ways in *consequence* of Adam's sin, and in this sense his sin may be said to be imputed to us; but the sin itself never can become ours.

3. Some have thought that the sins of men are to be regarded as a *punishment* for Adam's sin. But neither is this theory to be admitted. Adam was not threatened with the sin and ruin of his posterity, in case he eat the forbidden fruit, but rather with that *eternal death* which is the proper penalty of the law. And besides, where is the justice or propriety of thus punishing Adam in his posterity? Where is the justice of it, so far as his posterity is concerned? This would be, not to visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children *consequentially*, but to *punish* the child for its father's sin,—a thing which God has declared he can never do. (See Ezek. xviii. 20.) And where is the justice of such punishment, so far as Adam is himself concerned? If Adam repented of his sins and was forgiven, and has gone to heaven, why should he continue to be punished in his posterity? Or if he died in his sins, and has gone to perdition, he is suffering the full reward of them in his own person, and why should he be punished in his posterity? In every view, therefore, this theory of punishment appears to be unfounded.

4. It has been held by some that the forbidden fruit possessed a *deleterous, poisonous quality*, which infected the bodies of our first parents, and through them the bodies of all their descendants; and that when a soul becomes connected with one of these infected bodies, it receives from it a taint, a degree of corruption, a bias or propensity to evil.

As to the poisonous quality of the forbidden fruit, we read nothing of it in the Scriptures, and have no means of determining whether it was so or not. But this we know, that the infection which has come down to us from Adam was of a moral, and not a physical character. It seems primarily to affect the souls of men, and not their bodies. The bodies of men are debased, perverted, and destroyed through the influence of a sinful soul, and not the soul (as the Gnostics dreamed) through the influence of the body.

5. We come next to the Pelagian theory, that the sins of men

may all be owing to the mere force of *education* and *example*. The example of Adam corrupted his immediate descendants, and their example corrupted the next generation, and so on down to the present time. But while we are willing to allow much to the force of parental example and influence, we cannot admit that this method of accounting for the sins of men is satisfactory. For, in the first place, children begin to sin before they are capable of being much influenced by example any way. They are selfish, peevish, petulant, revengeful, before they can have imbibed these hateful passions from the influence of those around them. And besides; those children who are most favored in point of example are just as sure to commence their moral existence sinners, and to need the regenerating influences of the Spirit as any others; thus showing that the ground of corruption lies deeper than the mere force of education and example.

6. I notice but another method of accounting for the facts under consideration, and that is by referring them to *diabolical influence*. The devil seduced our first parents; and why not suppose him to have seduced all their descendants, and to have established and perpetuated the reign of sin over them? To this I reply, that while I have no doubt that much of the sin existing in the world is to be ascribed to diabolical influence, it does not seem either reasonable or scriptural to account for the *natural* and *universal* sinfulness of mankind in this way. The devil rather takes advantage of the *natural* sinfulness of men, to lead them into flagrant, outbreaking acts of wickedness, than is himself the author of our natural sinfulness. Besides, the natural sinfulness of men, we have seen, is in Scripture ascribed to their connection with Adam, and not to the temptations of the devil.

But if these various suppositions are all to be rejected, what are we to believe on the subject before us? How are we to connect the natural and universal sinfulness of men with the first offence of Adam?

I know of no better way of connecting these two solemn facts —none more satisfactory in itself or more in accordance with Scripture and reason—than by referring them to the operation of a *natural law*,—one of wide extent, of invariable sequence, and of the utmost importance,—that, according to which every-

thing in nature *produces its like*. This law holds good through the entire vegetable and animal kingdoms. It was impressed upon all living, organized existence, at the creation. "Let the earth bring forth the living creature *after his kind*, cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth *after his kind*" (Gen. i. 24). In accordance with this law, man propagates his own species, and not another. He brings forth offspring *after his kind*. And not only so, he brings them forth in *the same moral state* or *condition* in which he is himself. Had the first man continued holy to the end of his trial, his nature would have been uncorrupt, and his offspring, inheriting such a nature, would have commenced their moral existence holy. But when Adam fell into sin his very nature became corrupted. His understanding, in regard to spiritual things, was darkened, and his sensibilities were deranged and perverted, so that he fell at once under the influence of a standing *proclivity* or *tendency* to sin. To this tendency he yielded, and continued freely, spontaneously sinning on, until he was renewed (if he ever was) by sovereign grace.

In this state of perversion, corruption, and spiritual death, our first parents brought forth their offspring, and, in accordance with the law above referred to, they brought forth *their like*. As *their* natures were corrupted and depraved, so have been the natures of their children, and their children's children to the thousandth generation. As they had a natural proneness or tendency to sin, so have their children. And as, under the influence of this tendency, they went on freely, actively sinning, so do their children. "They are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born" (Ps. lviii. 3). "That which is born of the flesh *is flesh*" (John iii. 6).

The statement here given does not imply that the *souls* of men are propagated like their bodies, but that, in creating souls, and connecting them with bodies, God acts according to a *fixed law*,—the great law of descent, in accordance with which everything in nature produces its like.

Nor does it imply that the fall of Adam wrought in us any change of faculties, as to number or kind. As remarked in a previous Lecture, man has the same faculties now (though not

perhaps in the same perfect state) that Adam had before he sinned.

Nor does the explanation above given imply that the posterity of Adam have inherited their first father's *sin;* or that they have any sin attaching to them which is not strictly their own. They have inherited a corrupt nature and corrupt propensities, —a natural proneness or tendency to sin, but not sin itself.

Nor does it imply that men ever become sinners but by *their own active, personal sinning.* Sin is, in its very nature, an active thing, and cannot be predicated of a passive substance or state.

The theory here propounded is not very different from that which ascribes the connection between our sin and that of Adam to the sovereign *purpose* or *constitution* of God; since the law of descent, of which I have spoken, is of divine appointment and ordination. Like all the other laws of nature, it is but a regular, established mode of divine operation.

That depraved, corrupted state of the soul, of which I have spoken, and which, by the law of descent, has come to us from Adam, does not at all lessen our obligations, or diminish our natural ability to be holy. We have still all the faculties of moral agency (and these constitute natural ability) in the exercise of which we may be holy or sinful, as we please. Our natural tendency to evil is of the nature of a standing *motive* or *inducement*, which ought to be resisted and overcome. And so it *would be* if all the powers of the soul were exerted in a proper manner. But instead of this, the human family, one after another, yield to it, fall before it, and continue under the power of sin, until delivered by the recovering grace of God.

But it will be asked, Is not that natural *tendency*, *disposition*, *inclination* to sin, of which we have spoken, in itself sinful? How can it be otherwise? To this I answer, A *tendency* to a thing cannot, from the very terms employed, be the same as the thing itself. A tendency to sin cannot be sin; for this would imply that the tendency, and that to which it tends, are identical. And as to the words *disposition* and *inclination*, I have remarked, in a previous Lecture, that they are used in different senses. A disposition to any *outward act* is made up of internal

voluntary exercises, and is holy or sinful, according as these are good or bad. And the character of the outward act is always to be referred to the disposition which originated it. But there is another sense, in which the words disposition and inclination are used, which requires to be carefully distinguished. A disposition for the putting forth of certain internal voluntary exercises cannot consist of such exercises, but rather of a *preparation* for them, or tendency to them. This is the ulterior and more strictly etymological view of the word in question. It is in this sense that the word has been used in the foregoing discussion. It denotes a *state* of the mind, and not an *act* of it, and is in itself neither sinful nor holy.

It will be said, perhaps, that to bring men into existence with a prevailing bias or tendency to sin, is as bad, every way, as to *make them sinners*, or cause them to *inherit a sin* anterior to any exercise or act or their own. But so it does not seem to me. The one theory makes God the responsible author of sin, —at least of that sin which attaches to our passive natures, and which we bring into the world with us. The other theory makes him the author of only a *tendency* to sin; and this in accordance with a general and most benevolent law, the course of which could not be interrupted without a constant miracle.

If God *made* us sinners, without any act or concurrence of our own, then, clearly, he is the author of our sin. Or if he so made us, that we are under a *natural necessity* of sinning from the first,—so made us that we *must* sin, whether we will or no; then we are more to be pitied that blamed. But if he made us with only a bias, a tendency to sin, with entire natural ability to overcome this tendency, and with entire moral liberty whether to yield to it or not; then I see not that he is to blame because his creatures yield to it, and voluntarily fall before it. Their sin, in this case, is their own, and they are alone responsible.

It has been thought to be inconsistent with the goodness of God that he should give existence to creatures who, he certainly knew, would fall into sin. But this objection lies equally against every system of doctrine which asserts the foreknowledge of God. That there is a great deal of sin in the world,

no person can doubt. And God saw in eternity, if he created the world, and placed men upon it, that it would be so. Why, then, did he create? Why did he bring men into being, when he saw and knew that they would sin against him? When the objector has satisfactorily answered these questions, he will have little difficulty with any others growing out of the views which have been here exhibited.

Of the doctrine which has been advanced in respect to natural depravity, or the connection of our sin with that of Adam, the following is the sum. Descending, as we have, from a fallen, corrupted progenitor, and inheriting, as we do, a nature like his own, we all commence our moral existence under the influence of a natural bias, a tendency to sin; a state of mind not sinful in itself, but operating as a standing propensity to sin; a propensity which we ought to overcome, but of ourselves never do; a state of mind in which it is certain that we shall freely sin, and only sin, until we are renewed by sovereign grace.

LECTURE XXXV.

THE CHARACTER OF INFANTS.

Intimately connected with the subject of depravity, which has been before us in the two previous Lectures, is that of *infant character*. And this is a very important subject. The entire human race, with the exception of Adam and Eve, either have commenced, or will commence, their existence in infancy. Hence, we are all interested to know so much as we may respecting the state and character of the infant. Besides, no inconsiderable portion of our race die in infancy. In what state and character, then, do they die? And what is to become of them after they leave the world?

The theories of infant character now before the public naturally divide themselves into two classes: the one regarding the infant as *innocent*, the other holding him to be a *sinner*. I know not that any Christians have said that infants, at the first, were positively holy. Pelagius himself would not have said so much as this. But there are those who hold them to be negatively *innocent;* they have no sin; and this because they are not moral agents, and have no moral character at all.

Of those who take this ground there are two distinct classes: the *Pelagian* and the *Evangelical*. The Pelagian insists that the infant has inherited no corruption of any kind from Adam; that he is born as he would have been if Adam had not sinned. He has no moral character at the first; but when moral agency commences, and he begins to have a character, it is as likely to be good as bad. If he is rightly instructed, and a proper example is set before him, it is even more likely to be holy than sinful. And as this individual advances in life, his character will be a mixed one, in which holiness or sin will be likely to

predominate, according as the influences with which he is surrounded are good or bad.

We hardly need stop to refute this theory of infant character, as no evangelical Christian can possibly adopt it. It is inconsistent with all those Scriptures which speak of the entire sinfulness of the natural man. It is inconsistent with the doctrine of regeneration. It leaves no room or ground for any radical distinction between the righteous and the wicked. It is contradicted in the experience of all spiritually enlightened Christians, and no such Christian can intelligently adopt it.

But there is another class who believe that the infant is not a moral agent, and consequently has no sin, who still believe that he has inherited a degree of *depravation* or *mental derangement* from a fallen father. He is not in the state he would have been, if Adam had not sinned. He is in such a state, that as soon as moral agency commences, and he begins to do anything of a moral nature, he begins to sin; and from this time forward all his moral acts are sinful, until he is renewed by sovereign grace.

It will be seen that, although this theory agrees with the last in regarding the infant as yet without sin, it differs from it in other important respects, and must not be confounded with it. The former doctrine is unevangelical; this is not necessarily so. It is held by some excellent ministers and Christians; still, it is open to very serious objections.

In the first place, this sinless infant, who is not yet a moral agent, is either a human being—a member of the great family of man—or he is not. If he is not yet a human being, then he is a mere animal; and why not regard and treat him as an animal? Why baptize him, or pray for him, or have a funeral for him in case of death, more than for any other little animal? And why indulge any fond hopes, should he be taken away, in respect to his immortality?

But it will be conceded by those with whom we now reason, that the infant *is* of the same race with us,—*is* a human being. And if so, then he possesses all that pertains to a human being. He has a human soul, as well as body; a soul in possession of all the human faculties; and these faculties, it should seem,

must be in an active state. How can they be otherwise? What are we to think of a healthful human soul, in possession of all the faculties of a soul, existing for months, and as some say years, in a state of inactivity, thinking, feeling, doing nothing, and being, as to any conscious, active existence, as though it had not been?

Besides, we know that the soul of the infant is not inactive. It is in full activity very early, and probably from the first. It begins to receive ideas from the outer world the first moment it enters it; which shows that the *intellect* is not inactive. It has feeling, too, and commonly expresses it, almost with its first breath; which shows that the *sensibilities* are active. The *will* is also active, visibly active, moving the different members of the body.

But it will be said, although there may be action, there is no moral action, and of course no moral character. But if the action of the infant is not moral action, then it is mere animal action, and we are thrown back upon the absurd hypothesis of a mere animal existence. Besides, if moral action does not commence at the first, when does it commence? When does the child cease to be a mere animal, and begin to be an intelligent moral being? Whenever this change takes place it is obviously a great change, and ought to be a very perceptible one. It should seem there could be no difficulty in determining the time. And yet who ever has determined it? Who can?

But we have not yet done with the difficulties and absurdities of this hypothesis. If the infant has not yet any moral agency or character, is it an accountable being? Accountable for what? If called into judgment, as all human beings must be, what has it to account for? It has no moral character, has done nothing, either good or evil; and for what shall it give an account?

But further: Is this infant, without any moral character, an *immortal* being? Most people are persuaded that deceased infants do live hereafter; but on the theory we are considering, where do they live? Not in heaven; for they have done nothing good. They are not holy. Not in hell; for they have no sin, and consequently deserve no punishment. In what region

of the future world then (if they exist at all) are they to be placed?

Such are some of the difficulties which beset the theory, that the infant, at the first, has no moral character, either sinful or holy. They lie equally against the Pelagian view, and the more plausible evangelical view. We dismiss them both; and shall endeavor to show that the infant *has* a moral character from the first, and that this character is *sinful*. We touch not the question here, on what *grounds* infants are to be regarded as sinners. This point will be considered in another place. But the fact of their sinfulness, we hold to be susceptible of abundant proof. In support of it we urge,—

1. That infants are the descendants of Adam, the father of us all. The Scriptures assure us that all the descendants of Adam, without an exception, are sinners. "Through the offence of one, *the many are* dead,"—spiritually dead. "By one man's disobedience, *the many are made sinners*." "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Rom. v. 15–19). There is no evading the force of these passages. They represent the posterity of Adam, universally, as somehow sinners, dead in sin, and under condemnation, in consequence of his first offence. We have only to ask, then, are infants among the posterity of Adam? Are they his children?

2. We put this argument in a somewhat different shape, and urge the sinful character of infants from the fact that they are *human beings*, and belong to the *human race*. The sinfulness of the entire human race, without an exception, is taught in the plainest terms in the Bible. "Man's heart is evil from youth;" —not this man, that, or the other; but *man in the general*,— *every man*. "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil." This, too, is spoken of the sons of men generally, *universally*. Paul says: "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that *they are all under sin*." This verse, with those that follow it (Rom. iii. 9–12), teaches, as plainly as words can teach anything, that mankind universally are sinners. Not only is no exception made, but all exception is, by the very terms, excluded. "There is none that doeth good; *no, not one*." We have only to ask, then, as before: Are infants included among

mankind? Are they of the human species? If so, they are, by the testimony of the Creator, sinners.

3. There are many other Scriptures which teach the same doctrine,—some of which were remarked upon in my last Lecture. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" that is, *fleshly*, *carnal*, *sensual*, *sinful*. It is as certain from these words that infant children are sinful, as it is that they are born of the flesh. David says: "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Ps. lviii. 3). Does the Psalmist mean to say here, that the wicked are *not* estranged from God until they have learned to speak, and begin literally to tell lies? Or does he mean as he says: "The wicked are estranged *from the womb;* they go astray *as soon as they be born;*" possessing, from the first, an evil, deceitful, lying spirit? The latter is clearly the sense of the passage; and thus interpreted, it is decisive to our present purpose. We have a parallel passage in Isaiah xlviii. 8: "I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously and wast called *a transgressor from the womb.*"

Paul, speaking of himself and his Christian brethren, says: "And were *by nature* children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. ii. 3). To be a child of wrath is to be a sinner; and such, the apostle assures us, mankind are *by nature*. The passage obviously teaches that men are sinners *by nature*, from their birth; since whatever belongs to us *by nature* must be from birth.

I quote but another passage. Paul says again: "If one died for all, then *were all dead*" (2 Cor. v. 14). The word *dead* here obviously means *dead in sin*, and such, the apostle tells us, is the state of all for whom Christ died. We have only to ask, therefore: Did Christ die for infants? Have they any interest in his death? If so, then they are sinners,—dead in sin.

4. That infants are in some way sinners is evident from their title to *circumcision* and *baptism*. No one doubts that infants, under the old dispensation, were circumcised; and no Pedobaptist doubts that they are now to be baptized. But what is the import of these religious rites? What do they signify? We understand both as signifying much the same; the former, the circumcision of the heart, or regeneration; the latter, "the

washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." But should religious rites be applied to infants, which denote the renewing, cleansing, purifying of the heart, if the heart is not impure, if it needs no cleansing,—in other words, if it is not sinful? This argument was constantly urged by Augustine against the Pelagians: "Why baptize infants, if they have no sin?" And the argument, as it seems to us, is perfectly conclusive.

5. We infer, from the *sufferings* of infants, that they are sinners. That infants suffer early, and in some instances severely, there can be no doubt. And there are but three ways in which to account for their sufferings, in consistency with the goodness and justice of God. They must either suffer as mere animals, and on the same ground as other animals; or they must suffer, as Christ did, by their own consent; or they must suffer as sinners, and for their sins. The first supposition reduces infants to the condition of mere animals, which few persons will consent to do. The second, no one will claim to support. We are shut up, therefore, to the last. The infant suffers for his sins.

It may be said, perhaps, that the infant suffers for the sin of Adam. But those who say this will also say, that he is a *partaker* of the sin of Adam, and guilty of it; so that, after all, he suffers for his own sin.

6. That infants are sinners may be further proved by *their death*. We might infer as much as this from the mere fact of their dying (unless we will consent to place them in the same category with brute animals), even if we had no light from the Scriptures on the subject. But the Scriptures do afford us light. They assure us, in the plainest terms, that, to all the sons and daughters of Adam, *death is a fruit of sin*. "By one man sin entered into the world, and *death by sin;* and so death hath passed upon all men, for that *all have sinned*" (Rom. v. 12). It is as certain, from this and the parallel passages, that infants are sinners, as it is that they are subject to death: For to all the human species, the posterity of Adam, death is a fruit and a proof of sin. I only add,—

7. The sinfulness of infants is proved from the fact of *their*

salvation. Many persons are unwilling to admit the sinful character of infants, from a fear that it will endanger their salvation. But our reply to such is, that if infants are not sinners, *they cannot be saved.* Saved from what, if they have no sin? Not from the punishment of sin; for they have done nothing to deserve the punishment. Not from the curse of the law; for they have never broken the law. Not from sin itself; for they have none. In short, there is nothing, on this ground, for the infant to be saved from, and his salvation, from the nature of the case, is impossible. Most Christians hope and believe that those who die in infancy are saved. Such, certainly, is my own belief. But I could not indulge such a belief a moment, if I did not regard the infant as a sinner.[1]

We have now proved, we think conclusively, and from several sources of evidence, that infants are sinners. They have a moral character, and this is sinful. The question now arises, *How* are they sinful? On what grounds? In what way?

On these questions, those who are agreed as to the fact of infant sinfulness are divided into three classes. 1. Those who hold that we all existed and sinned in a previous life, and brought a sinful character into the world with us. 2. Those who teach that the infant has a sinful nature, but no actual sin. 3. Those who hold that it has active moral affections from the first, and that these are selfish and sinful. Let us examine each of these theories or suppositions in their order. And,—

First. That of an active, moral, and sinful existence, in a previous state. This idea has its advocates in Germany, and is held by some in our own country. The supposition is, that at the time of the original revolt in heaven, a vast multitude of angels, of different orders, were drawn into it, and apostatized together. Of these, the great leaders, the more knowing and guilty ones, were driven at once from heaven, and sent down to hell. But towards the multitude, who were less guilty, God was pleased to entertain thoughts of mercy. He was pleased to reserve them for another probation,—a probation of *grace*, in the pres-

[1] We do not say that the infant dying without sin may not possibly go to heaven; but he cannot go there *through the salvation of the gospel;* through the washing of regeneration and sprinkling of the blood of Christ. This mode of getting to heaven necessarily implies sin.

ent world. Being sent one after another into human bodies, these constitute the present race of men; and such is the probation which is passing here on the earth.

1. My first objection to this theory is, that it is a mere assumption, without one particle of proof. It has no proof from Scripture. It has none from consciousness; or memory, or (so far as I know) from any other source.

2. According to this theory, the whole race of men are no other than fallen angels. But the Scriptures distinguish between fallen angels and men. They belong to different species. They constitute a different order of beings. Men were never angels, nor were the angels ever men. Man "was made a little lower than the angels" (Ps. viii. 5).

3. The theory before us supposes that only a part of the sinning angels were thrust down to hell; whereas the Scriptures teach that this was the fate of them all. No exceptions are made. "God spared not the angels that sinned,"—not one of them (2 Pet. ii. 4). "The *angels* which kept not their first estate hath he reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 4).

4. The Scriptures further teach that the spirit of man is created when it enters the body, and not that it comes from a preëxistent state. So it was with the first man. God did not take an old devil, and put it into Adam's new-made body, but "he breathed into him the breath of life, and *he became a living soul;*" or, as Paul expresses it, he *was made* a living soul" (1 Cor. xv. 45). And as it was with the first man, so it has been with men ever since. Accordingly, God is said to "*form the spirit of man within him*" (Zech. xii. 1).

5. The Scriptures assure us that the primeval state of man on the earth was a *holy state.* "God made man *upright*" (Ecc. vii. 29). He made him in his own image and likeness, and blessed the new-made pair; "and God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was *very good*" (Gen. i. 27–31). But on the theory before us, our first parents were as entirely corrupt before they eat the forbidden fruit, as afterwards. They were old transgressors from another world, who had been sent into bodies here, that they might have a new probation.

6. The Scriptures expressly connect our state of sin and death with *the fall of Adam*, and not with a previous state of sin in some other world. This point was fully discussed in our last Lecture, and need not be further dwelt upon here.

7. According to the Scriptures, we are to be called into judgment only for "the deeds done *in the body*" (2 Cor. v. 10). Whereas, on the view we are considering, our deeds in that previous life ought all of them come into the account in making up our destinies for eternity.

For these reasons we reject the first theory of infant sinfulness, and proceed to a consideration of the second; viz., that of an inherited *sinful nature*. And here let us inquire, first of all, what is meant by a sinful nature? If by nature is meant something *active* within us,—internal sinful affections which are *natural* to us, and coeval with our being? in this sense, infants may have a sinful nature. But if by nature is meant something in which we are not active,—something in the state and constitution of the soul,—something back of, and distinct from, all sinful affections, and out of which such affections grow; in this sense of the word in question, I cannot account for the sin of infants by supposing them to possess a sinful nature. A nature, in this sense, cannot be sinful. It is not a thing of which sin or holiness—in both of which we are active—can be predicated. We may have a *nature to sin*, but not, in the sense above given, a *sinful nature*. But on this point I need not dwell, as it has been so fully considered in our previous Lectures.

We reject, then, the second theory as to the sin of infants, and proceed to a consideration of the third; viz., that the infant has active moral affections from the first, and that these are selfish and sinful.

Having rejected the two former theories of infant sinfulness, we are, in a manner, shut up to this. If infants are sinners at all, it would seem they must be on the ground here proposed. And what objection to this supposition? If the infant is a human being, then, as I have before said, he has a human soul, with all the faculties of a human soul; and these faculties, we know, are active. The *intellect* is active, receiving new ideas continually; the *sensibilities* are active, and quick to feel; the

will also is visibly active. The voluntary muscles begin to move, not as, *ante partum*, from the life of the mother, but from the child's own separate, individual life. Here, then, is a human soul, with all the faculties of a soul, and each of them in an active state. And what objection to the idea that there are internal exercises and affections which may be sinful?

My own belief is, that, in the conceptions ordinarily entertained as to the capacities of infant children, we do them great injustice. Their minds are much more vigorous and active than we are wont to imagine. It cannot be doubted that the child of ordinary capacity receives more new ideas, during the first year of its life, than in any subsequent year. It becomes familiar with all surrounding objects. It acquires, among a thousand other things, the elements of a language. If it cannot speak its mother tongue (as many can), it can understand it in all its simpler and more common uses. And yet it has been made a question whether little children have souls,—whether they are capable of knowing anything. I would as soon doubt whether the man who raises such a question has a soul, as whether the child has of whom he speaks.

But it will be said that sin is the transgression of a *known* law; and as the infant has no knowledge of God or his law, therefore it is incapable of sinning. But how much is meant, when it is said that sin is the transgression of a known law? Must the child, before it can sin, be old enough to be instructed as to the existence and government of God, and the claims of his law? Then many adult persons cannot sin. On this ground, the whole class of uneducated deaf mutes would be incapable of sinning; and the same may be said of many of the heathen. These have never been instructed as to God or his law, and have no proper conceptions of either. It will not be pretended, therefore, that sin is the transgression of known law, in any such sense as this.

Every human being may be supposed to have, in the language of Paul, "the law of God written in the heart" (Rom. ii. 15). In other words, every human being has the capacity of moral perception, and has some degree of such perception,—*some* knowledge of the right, in distinction from the wrong. This

the heathen have. This the deaf-mutes have. This the child has very early, and may have, for aught we know to the contrary, from the first. Why may it not as early perceive the more obvious differences between right and wrong as between light and darkness, or as between different colors and sounds? Of this law, written on the heart of every human being, sin is a trangression; and if infants are human beings, they are capable of it. Yea, more than this, *they are chargeable with it;* for we have before proved that infants are sinners.

Selfishness, in a human being, is always sin. And of this hateful affection, children are as capable in infancy as they ever are. Indeed, they begin to manifest their selfishness, and various other forms of sin, as soon as they exhibit anything,—almost as soon as they are born. How long do children ordinarily live before they begin to manifest peevishness, fretfulness, impatience, a stubborn will, resistance to parental authority, and other like form of wickedness?

But we read of some in the Bible, it is said, who had "no knowledge between good and evil." Such persons, surely, could not sin. Moses does indeed say, in a single instance, "Your children which, in that day, had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall inherit the land, and to them will I give it" (Deut. i. 39). But does Moses mean to represent these children as without the faculties of moral agents; without any character, good or bad; as having little more than an animal existence? We do not so understand the passage. Moses here adopts the very common description of little children, whose knowledge is limited, who have had little or no instruction respecting God and his law. Of such children it may be said, in a qualified sense, that they have "no knowledge between good and evil,"—*comparatively* none; while yet they may have the law of God written on the heart, and may habitually transgress it. Does any one doubt that the children in that congregation which came out of Egypt were selfish beings, or that selfishness is sin?"

*"No one," says Augustine, "is clear from sin in thy sight; not even the infant, whose life is only one day." . . . "I have seen and observed an infant, full of envy and pale with anger. He looked at his fellow-suckling with bitterness in his countenance."—*Confessions*, Book i.

We have now shown that infant children have a moral and a sinful character, and on what grounds they are to be regarded as possessing such a character. Not that they come into the world sinners, from some preëxistent state; nor that they have a sinful nature, but no actual sin; but they are sinners, because they are selfish beings. They have, from the first, the germs, the buddings, the beginnings of selfishness; and all selfishness is sin.

And if any one now asks, How are such infants to be saved? I answer, In much the same manner as adults. The adult has a selfish, sinful heart, which must be changed by the Holy Spirit, if he is ever saved; and so has the infant. The adult must be forgiven, through the atonement of Christ; and so must the infant. Both are saved, if saved at all, through the washing of regeneration, and the sprinkling of atoning blood.

Those who regard the infant mind as *disordered* on account of the fall, but not sinful, believe that the Holy Spirit comes into it, and corrects its disorders; and they call this correction regeneration. But it is *no* regeneration, in the gospel sense of the term. Regeneration is a change of the heart, of the moral affections, from sin to holiness. But the infant, according to the supposition, has no moral affections to be changed. It has no sinful heart to be renewed. It is as incapable of regeneration, in the proper sense of the term, as it is supposed to be of sin. And as to its indebtedness to Christ for the forgiveness of sin, this, too, is impossible to the infant; because it has no sins to be forgiven.

But it will be asked, If the infant is capable of sinning, is it also of repenting of its sins, so that they may be washed away? To this we reply, If the infant has moral affections at all, then these may be changed from selfishness to benevolence, from sin to holiness; in which case it will have the *element* of repentance, though not perhaps the precise form of it. It has that which *will be* repentance the moment it comes to a sight and sense of its own sins. In this respect, the case of the renewed infant resembles that of the pious heathen. I can conceive of a heathen who may be saved by Christ, though he has never heard of him, and of course has never exercised that particular form of holi-

ness which we call *faith in Christ*. But if he is truly pious, he has the *element* of faith, though not the form. He has that which *will be* faith, the moment he gets a view of Christ, or comes where he is. And so of the renewed infant. Its affections being changed from sin to holiness, it has now the element of all holiness. And its holiness will assume the different forms of repentance, faith, submission, love, whenever the appropriate objects of these several graces are presented to its mind.

It is a recommendation of the view here given as to the character and prospects of infants, that it places them among the human race, and makes the ground of their salvation the same as that of the rest of mankind. If they are saved at all, as we hope and trust they are, they are saved, like other sinners, on the ground of the gospel. They are renewed, pardoned, adopted into the family of God, and become his children. And when they are taken up to heaven, they will stand in the midst of the ransomed throng and sing: "Not unto us, not unto us, but to him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be all the glory of our salvation."

There is yet another advantage of the view we have taken. It removes all embarrassment as to the time when children begin to act for themselves, and holds out the strongest inducements to parental fidelity. The question is frequently asked: "When do children begin to be moral agents, to act for themselves, and to be guilty of actual sin?" On the theories we reject, these are impracticable questions. They never have been answered, and never can be. But on the theory we propose, there is no difficulty. The child begins to be a moral agent, to act for himself, and to commit sin, *from the first*. It receives its soul, as Adam did his, with the first breath of life, and sets up for itself a distinct moral agent as soon as it is born. Its capacities are indeed feeble, its exercises feeble, and its sin of small account, compared with what it will be, if not forsaken, in future years; still it is selfishness, it is sin, it is of the same hateful nature as other sin, and, if left unchecked, unrestrained, will soon break forth into the most frightful forms of wickedness.

And now, if it be asked, How long may this little one's salvation be hoped for, *as an infant*, in case it is removed by death?

I answer, Its salvation is not to be looked for at all, except as it is renewed by the Holy Spirit, and cleansed in the atoning blood of Christ. So long as the infant is incapable of parental instruction, it may be hoped that the Spirit will do for it, *without* such instruction, what, later in life, it could only be expected to do with it. And as soon as the period of instruction arrives, —and arrive it will very soon,—if parents are faithful to the souls of their children, they have abundant reason to hope that, living or dying, God will bless them with his salvation.

Let them, then, commence early, and pursue assiduously, the work which God has given them to do. From the first, their children should be the objects of earnest prayer. From the first, they should be consecrated and devoted to the Lord. And as the infant mind begins to open to receive impressions from parental lips, let their "doctrine drop as the rain, and distil as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." For although, as we said, so long as the child is incapable of parental instruction, the Spirit may be relied upon to bestow his blessing without it; yet the Holy Spirit will never connive at parental unfaithfulness. He will not make himself, in this way, the minister of sin. Parents who carelessly neglect their duties to their children, and trust to the Holy Spirit for their conversion, may be terribly disappointed. It will be no more than justice if they should be.

Let parents, then, be careful to do *their* work, and the Holy Spirit will do his. But let them neglect their appropriate work, and trifle with their obligations as parents, and there is little hope either for their children or themselves.

LECTURE XXXVI.

THE ATONEMENT—ITS NECESSITY.

The word *atonement* occurs but once in our English New Testament, and is the translation of a Greek word (καταλλαγην) which, in every other instance, is rendered *reconciliation*. An atonement, therefore, in the sense of our translators, is a reconciliation. But the word has undergone a slight change of meaning within the last two hundred years. As now used it denotes, not so much a reconciliation, as that which is done *to open and prepare the way* for a reconciliation. As used by evangelical Christians, it refers to what has been done by our Lord Jesus Christ, to *open a way* for the recovery and salvation of sinful men, that so a reconciliation may be effected between them and their Maker.

There were atonements under the former dispensation; but these were of a merely typical character. The blood of beasts was designed to prefigure, to shadow forth, the great atonement which, in the fulness of time, was to be made by the blood of Christ upon the cross. We shall have no occasion to refer to these typical atonements, except as they serve to throw light upon the important doctrine now before us.

It may be proper to say, in passing, that the word atonement is seldom used by the older Protestant theologians, except in reference to the typical atonements of the Old Testament. It does not occur in any of the confessions or catechisms of the Reformed churches, and probably not in any of the theological writings of the seventeenth century. Not even President Edwards or Dr. Hopkins has aught to say of the *atonement* of Christ, under that specific name. They have much to say of his great work of *redemption*, and what is now called the atonement is merged in that.

The separating of the atonement from the more general doctrine of redemption has tended much to simplify the subject, and so has been a real gain to theology. The atonement of Christ is a specific work. It relates to what he did and suffered to open a way for the salvation of sinners. Redemption is a more general work, including all that Christ has ever done, or will do, in promoting and securing the salvation of his people. The atonement is universal, as to its sufficiency. Redemption, in the full sense of the term, applies only to the elect. The work of atonement was finished when Christ bowed his head and gave up the ghost. The work of redemption is not yet finished, nor will it be until all the elect are gathered in.

In entering upon the discussion before us, our first inquiry will be as to the *necessity* of an atonement. There are those who doubt this necessity. The sinner is bound to search out his sins, and when he sees them to repent of them. He is able, and is justly required to repent; and when he does repent he may be forgiven and saved. There is nothing in the way of his salvation but his impenitence, and this difficulty he is well able to overcome. Or, if he is not able of himself to come to repentance, God surely can bring him to repentance without first resorting to the strange expedient of offering up his own Son upon the cross.

But if the death of Christ was not needed to make an atonement for sin, it is hard to see why he should have died at all. It is agreed by all that Christ was a perfectly holy being. Of course, he could not have died for his own sins. It is agreed, too, that his death took place in the providence of God. And how are we to account for such a dispensation; how vindicate the propriety or the justice of it, but upon the supposition of a needed atonement? If Christ's death was necessary to make an atonement for sin, and if in view of such necessity he was willing to die, then there is no difficulty. The reasons of the transaction and the justice of it, so far as the hand of God was concerned in it, are clear. But on any other supposition, we know not what to think of such an event, or how to account for it, in consistency with the rectitude of Providence. That God should bring an innocent man to the cross, when he had done

nothing to deserve such an infliction, and had not consented to it; bring him there, like any other victim, in spite of himself, and without any indispensable necessity, either on his own account, or that of others; how are we to justify such a transaction? Who can believe it? If it is hard to conceive (as some tell us) why the just should be suffered, with his own consent, to die for the unjust; is it not vastly more difficult to see why he should be made or suffered to die for nothing,—neither for his own sins nor for those of the world?

The necessity of an atonement, by the death of Christ, is plainly taught in the Scriptures. Our Saviour himself taught this doctrine. "The Son of man *must* suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark viii. 31). "The Son of man *must* be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again" (Luke xxiv. 7). "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 14). "Thus it is written, and thus it *behoved Christ to suffer*, and to rise from the dead on the third day" (Luke xxiv. 47). Paul reasoned with the Thessalonians out of the Scriptures, "opening and alleging that Christ *must needs have suffered*, and risen again from the dead" (Acts xvii. 3).

Perhaps it will be said that the necessity indicated in these passages results only from the fact, that Christ's sufferings and death have been predetermined and predicted, and the prediction must be fulfilled. But this, if it be admited, only places the argument one step further back. For why, if there was no inherent necessity for Christ's sufferings and death,—why were they predetermined? Why predicted? Why did it enter into the eternal purpose of God, that thus it should be?

The necessity of Christ's suffering, as a satisfaction for sin, is clearly indicated in what took place in the Garden of Gethsemane. "O my Father, if it be *possible*, let this cup pass from me!" "Abba, Father, all things are possible with thee; take away this cup from me." And why was not the cup of suffering taken away? Why was not such a thing possible? Let

those who think an atonement of suffering unnecessary, answer these questions if they can.

The necessity of an atonement in order to forgiveness is further taught in the *typical atonements* of the Old Testament. The sacrifice of the victim, in those days, was never intended as a *means* of repentance, or a *substitute* for it. It rather *implied* and *required* repentance. The offerer must be already penitent, else his sacrifice would not be accepted. Why, then, on the ground we oppose, was the sacrifice enjoined at all? The offerer is already penitent, and penitence, we are told, is enough. Why, then, must the innocent lamb be slain, and his blood be sprinkled upon the mercy-seat? Is not here conclusive proof that mere penitence is not enough; that an expiation is demanded; that something must be done to satisfy the law and the justice of God, or not even the penitent sinner can be pardoned and saved?

We have further evidence of the same truth, in that *faith* is made one of the indispensable conditions of salvation. Repentance is, indeed, an indispensable condition. We must repent, in order to be forgiven. And if mere repentance was enough, this ought to be the only condition. But there is also the indispensable condition of *faith*,—faith in *Christ*,—faith in *a crucified Redeemer*. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever *believeth on him* should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now this requisition of faith shows conclusively that repentance alone is *not* a sufficient ground of pardon. The Son of man must be lifted up. He must bleed and die upon the cross. And he must be accepted, trusted, *believed in*, as an atoning sacrifice, or there is no salvation for us.

Those who flatter themselves that repentance is alone sufficient to satisfy God's justice, as a moral governor, would do well to apply their theory to another kind of justice,—that which regulates the dealings of man with man. A honestly owes B a sum of money, and justice requires that it should be paid. But A is very sorry that he has got into B's debt. He humbles and blames himself, and heartily repents for so doing. But do his repentings cancel the claims of justice against him, or furnish

any sufficient grounds for his being released from his obligations? That would be a summary way of clearing off old debts, for the creditor to feel obliged to release the debtor from his obligations, so soon as he was sorry that he had contracted them. Every one can see that such a principle could not be tolerated in application to *commercial* justice; and why should it operate any more favorably when applied to *governmental* justice? The claims of the latter are not less stringent and inviolable than those of the former; and if the principle would work nothing but confusion in the former case, going to dissolve all the bands of commercial intercourse, how can it be shown that it would not work as disastrously, and even more so, in the latter?

The necessity of an atonement is often felt—*deeply*, *painfully* felt—under human governments. It was felt by King Darius, when "he set his heart on Daniel to deliver him" from the lion's den, and "labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him," but could not. Could Darius have hit upon some expedient, by which the authority of his law and government could have been as fully sustained, in delivering Daniel, as in punishing him; in other words, could he have devised and provided a sufficient *atonement* for Daniel; in that case he might safely have delivered him. But as this was found to be impossible, nought remained but that Daniel must go into the den of lions.

The same necessity was felt by the elder Brutus, when his sons had conspired against the Roman commonwealth. Could a sufficient atonement have been made for them, they might have been spared; but as none could be devised, the father was obliged to pass sentence of death upon them, and to stand by and see it executed.

The necessity of an atonement is continually and sometimes painfully felt in smaller governments. A child in a family, or a scholar in school, trangresses some established law, and is exposed to punishment. The father or master does not wish to punish, and he sets himself to devise some way, some expedient, by which his authority can be maintained, and the infliction be spared. If any such method can be devised, it is of the nature of an atonement. But if none is possible, the infliction

must follow, or the authority of the parent or master is weakened, and may be subverted.

I have employed these illustrations, for the purpose of showing and impressing the necessity of an atonement, if sinners are to be saved under the government of God. But perhaps the strongest argument, after all, for such necessity, grows out of the *fact* of an atonement, as certified to us in the Scriptures. The Bible does teach, in a great variety of forms, and in the plainest terms, that Christ's death upon the cross was of an *expiatory character;* that he died to make an atonement for sin. Thus he is said to have been "wounded for *our* transgressions" and "bruised for *our* iniquities." He is said to have "borne our sins;" to have "purged our sins;" to have "suffered for our sins;" to have "died for our sins;" and to have "shed his blood for the remission of sins." He is said to have "redeemed us to God by his blood;" and to have "redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us." He "laid down his life for us." He "gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God." He "gave his life a ransom for many." He was "delivered for our offences." "He tasted death for every man." He "is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." There is no end to representations such as these, taken from all parts of the Bible, and teaching as plainly as words can teach anything, that the death of Christ was an offering, an expiation, an atonement for the sins of men. They teach the *fact* of an atonement, and by necessary consequence, the *necessity* of it; for surely, if it had not been necessary, it never had been made. God would not have sent his Son into the world to take upon himself our nature and die in our stead, had there been no need of such a sacrifice. He would never have been at the expense of providing such an atonement, without a most urgent and indispensable necessity.

But if an atonement for sin was necessary, *why* was it necessary? *Why* must the Son of God come down and die, to open a way for the salvation of sinful men? Though these questions have been answered in part, in the remarks already made, still,

it may be necessary to give them a more particular consideration. And we answer,—

1. An atonement was necessary, in order that sinners might *be humbled and brought to repentance*. It is often insisted, as before remarked, that mere repentance is enough to insure forgiveness, without an atonement. But without an atonement, who had ever repented? How much true repentance had been found among men? It is in consequence of the atonement that the Holy Spirit is given, without whose influences no human being had ever surrendered his heart to God. It is in consequence of the atonement, that we are favored with the day and the means of grace; that the light of hope has dawned upon us, and an opportunity is afforded us to turn from our sins and live.

We do not deny the natural ability of sinful men to repent, or (which is the same) that they *can* repent if they will. But *will* they repent without an atonement? *Have* they? *Where* have they? The devils have natural ability to repent, and are under obligations to repent; but they never did, and they never will. And no more would one of the human race ever have repented, had not an atonement been made for him on the cross.

We would not say that no sinner of our race ever came to repentance without a *knowledge* of the atonement; though such instances, especially of adult sinners, it is believed are very rare. It is the preaching of the cross, emphatically, which results in the conversion of souls. It is at the foot of the cross, ordinarily, that the tear of penitence begins to flow. But we do insist and repeat, that, *had no atonement been provided*, not a soul of our race had ever repented of his sins. There had been no more true repentance among men on the earth than there is among the damned in the other world. "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give *repentance* unto Israel, and remission of sins" (Acts v. 31).

But this necessity for the atonement, after all, is not the most urgent and fundamental. There is a necessity greater than this. We remark, therefore,—

2. The atonement of Christ was necessary *to sustain and honor the broken law of God, to vindicate his authority, and*

satisfy his glorious justice. In carrying into effect his eternal purposes, God has undertaken to be, not only the universal Creator and Disposer, but a *moral Governor.* He has surrounded himself with intelligent creatures,—free, moral, responsible agents,—proper subjects of law and government; and he has undertaken to administer a moral government over them. He has undertaken to govern them, not by physical force, but by laws, motives, and moral considerations; by a system of just rewards and punishments. But, in order to the success of this vast undertaking, it is obviously necessary for the Supreme Ruler, as it is for any other ruler, to *sustain law.* He must not suffer his law to be trifled with and trampled on. He must maintain it inviolate, in all its strictness and strength, its authority and purity, or his government of *law* will be subverted and overthrown.

And here lies the necessity of an adequate atonement, if transgressors of the divine law are to be forgiven and saved. The law can be sustained, by punishing the transgressors, as they deserve; by inflicting upon them the threatened penalty. Can it be as fully sustained in any other way? Can any expedient be devised, by which the broken law can be honored, and God's righteous regard for it be displayed, and all the ends of government be secured, as fully, as perfectly, as they would be by inflicting the penalty? Such an expedient, if such an one be possible, would be an atonement,—a full and adequate atonement. On the ground of such an atonement, God could forgive and save sinners on such conditions as he was pleased to appoint, and yet not detract one iota from his law. His law would stand as inviolate, and his government as strong, as though the threatened penalty had been executed. But without some such expedient, or, in other words, without a sufficient atonement, to pardon and save sinners would be a moral impossibility. It could never be tolerated under the government of God. It could never consist with the stability and perfection of that government, or even with its continued existence.

At the hazard of some repetition, we wish to press this point, and to give it prominence,—*the necessity of an atonement to honor and sustain law.* God's law has been transgressed here

on the earth,—flagrantly transgressed. A whole world of sinners have cast off the authority of their Sovereign, and risen up in arms against him. God does not wish to punish them, or one of them. He has no pleasure in their death. But what can he do? His law must be honored. His holy government must be sustained, or be given up. It *can* be sustained by the infliction of the penalty on all those who have transgressed. Can it be in any other way? Is any substitute for this terrible infliction possible? Can any sufficient atonement be made? If an atonement *can* be made, then God may consistently pardon and save sinners; but if not, they must all suffer, or God's law and government must suffer. They must be punished as they deserve, or his holy government must be undermined and destroyed.

It is our happiness to know that, in the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, an expedient of salvation has been devised and executed. An atonement for sinners has been made. It was made in the sufferings and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we deserved to die, he died for us. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. Christ did not come into our world and die here for nothing. He did not die for a trifle. He would not take upon himself our nature and flesh, and endure all the agonies of the garden and the cross, without a most urgent necessity. We have seen that there *was* such a necessity for his death; and the grounds and reasons of that necessity have now been exhibited.

Our next inquiry will relate to the *nature* and *efficacy* of Christ's atonement. In what did it consist? And how does it avail for our redemption? But these inquiries will be reserved for the following Lecture.

LECTURE XXXVII.

THE ATONEMENT—ITS NATURE AND EFFICACY.

In my last Lecture I spoke of the *necessity* of an atonement, more especially in its bearing upon the law and the government of God. I am now to treat of its *nature* and *efficacy*. And,

First, of its *nature*. In what did the atonement of Christ consist? Did it consist in his *perfect holiness*, his *perfect obedience to the divine law?* Or in his *sufferings and death?* Or in *both?*

As the sufferings and death of Christ were *voluntarily* endured, they may be regarded as constituting a species of *obedience;* and so they are regarded in the Scriptures. He was "obedient *unto death*" (Phil. ii. 8). But this, which is sometimes called Christ's *passive* obedience, is not that about which we now inquire. Christ's "obedience unto death" is the same as his voluntary sufferings and death. But the obedience, which has been thought by some to enter into the nature of the atonement, and to constitute a part or the whole of it, is his *personal obedience to the divine law;* or, in other words, his *personal holiness.*

We are disposed to attach a high importance to the perfect, spotless holiness of the Saviour. It was indispensable to the work of atonement. It was that without which he could have made no atonement. He *must* be perfectly sinless himself, or he could not make an acceptable offering for the sins of others. "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; who needeth not daily," like the priests in Israel, "to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people" (Heb. vii. 26). Here, the necessity of the spotless holiness of the Saviour, in order that he might

perform the work of atonement, is clearly set forth. Still, in strictness of speech it can hardly be said, that the atonement of Christ consisted at all in his personal obedience or holiness.

In the first place, Christ's obedience could not meet the chief necessity of an atonement, as before explained. That which is needed is something to sustain law; something to stand in place of the threatened penalty of the law; something which will answer all the purposes of moral government as well as the execution of the penalty. An expedient of this nature would be an atonement. Anything short of it would not be. Now it is obvious that the perfect holiness of Christ was no substitute for the penalty threatened to transgressors. It was not adapted to be. It could not be. There was no need of *suffering* here. The penalty of the law consists in suffering, and an equivalent, a substitute, must be of the same nature.

A like view of the subject is presented in the typical atonements of the Old Testament. These all prefigured the atonement of Christ, and may be supposed, so far as they go, to prefigure it accurately. Now it was indispensable to the acceptableness of an offering under the law, that the animal offered should be perfect in its kind. It must be *without spot or blemish;* thus indicating the necessity of the spotless character of Christ. Accordingly, our Saviour is spoken of by Peter as "a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 14). Still, the typical atonement did not consist in the spotlessness of the victim, but in the shedding of its blood. It was the blood, emphatically, that made the atonement. So the atonement of Christ, prefigured by that of the law, must consist essentially in the shedding of his blood.

We have the same view presented in the *literal language* of the Bible. The utmost stress is laid everywhere upon the *cross*, the *blood*, the *death* of Christ, as that in which the expiation, the atonement properly consists. We hardly need quote passages, having referred to so many in the last Lecture. Christ is said to have been a sacrifice, an offering, an oblation, a propitiation for sin. He is said to have suffered for our sins, to have died for our sins, to have been delivered for our offences, and to have been made a curse for us, in hanging on a tree,

The strongest expressions are used in different parts of the Bible, to set forth the nature of Christ's atonement, as consisting in his sufferings and death.

And while so great stress is laid on the death of Christ, we find his obedience spoken of only in a few instances, and in most of these, if not all (as the connection shows) the reference is to what has been called his *passive* obedience, or his obedience unto death. "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became *obedient unto death*" (Phil. ii. 8). "Yet learned he obedience by the things that *he suffered*" (Heb. v. 8). "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. v. 19). These are, perhaps, the only passages in which the obedience of Christ is directly spoken of in the Bible. The first two refer, certainly, to his obedience *in suffering;* and by the most judicious commentators, the last passage quoted is interpreted in the same way.

But it will be said, although we do not find much in the Bible on the subject of Christ's obedience, very much is said respecting his *righteousness*, which amounts to the same thing. 'This is the name wherewith he shall be called, The Lord *our righteousness*" (Jer. xxiii. 6). It is admitted that, in the matter of justification, much stress is laid in the Scriptures on the *righteousness* of Christ; but we do not admit that this is the same as his personal *obedience* or *holiness*. The original words, translated "obedience" and "righteousness," are not the same, and not synonymous; neither is this true of the English words. Obedience to the law is the same as virtue or holiness in the general; while righteousness, in its original and proper signification, is *justice*, *equity*, *honesty*, *rectitude*, *right*. "He shall judge the world with *righteousness*, and the people with his truth" (Ps. xcvi. 13). "With *righteousness* shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and *righteousness* to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuges of lies' (Is. xi. 4; xxviii. 17). A principal source of error in regard to this subject has been the confounding of the terms obedience and righteousness, regarding them as of the same import, when they are not. Christ is not called by the prophet "Jehovah our *obe-*

dience," but "Jehovah our *righteousness;*" that is, Jehovah through whom we are *accounted as righteous, are justified;* without shutting us up to the notion of justification by the imputed obedience of the Saviour.

But it will be said, unless we consider the obedience of Christ as entering into the nature of the atonement, his atonement cannot be a full ground of justification. Justification involves, not merely a remission of the incurred penalty of the law, which is the same as forgiveness, but also a *restoration* to forfeited favor and happiness; and although the mere sufferings of Christ may be a sufficient ground of the former, they are not so of the latter. We need the imputed *obedience* and *merits* of Christ to lay a foundation for our being restored; and hence his obedience must be regarded as constituting an essential part of the atonement.

This is not the place to go into a consideration of objections to the doctrine of justification by the imputed obedience and merits of Christ. We pass these over entirely; and would simply say, that the principal ground of difficulty on the subject seems to us to lie in not rightly conceiving of *the penalty of God's law.* This penalty, in its fullest extent, is both *privative* and *positive.* It involves the loss of God's favor and the incurring of his displeasure; the loss of the rest and happiness of heaven, and the endurance of eternal miseries in hell. Such is the full penalty of the law of God, for the removal of which the atonement of Christ furnishes the sufficient and only foundation. In procuring the salvation of those who embrace it, it removes, first, the *positive* part of the penalty, so that they are no longer liable to suffer the pains of eternal death. It removes, secondly, the *privative* part, and thus restores them to the forfeited favor of God, and to the happiness of heaven. All this is implied in freeing the returning sinner from the full penalty of the law; or, which is the same, in *forgiveness;* using the term forgiveness in the widest sense. But forgiveness, in this sense, is the same, precisely, as justification; the one *restoring* the subject of it as much as the other. And so the case was regarded by the Apostle Paul. He repeatedly speaks of full forgiveness and justification as the same. "Through this man is preached unto

you the *forgiveness of sins;* and by him all that believe are *justified* from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 38). "Being *justified* freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for *the remission of sins*" (Rom. iii. 24). "David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works," or, which is the same, *justifieth*, "saying, Blessed are they whose *iniquities are forgiven*, and whose *sin is covered*" (Rom. iv. 6). The apostle here quotes from the thirty-second Psalm, in which David sets forth the blessedness of him who had humbly confessed his sins, and been forgiven, representing such an one as *justified;* which shows that in Paul's theology, justification and forgiveness are the same.

Calvin and other eminent theologians have taught the same doctrine. "The righteousness of faith," says Calvin, "is a reconciliation with God, which consists *solely in the remission* of sins." "The Lord cannot receive any one into favor or fellowship with himself without making him from a sinner to be a righteous person; and this is accomplished by *the remission of sins.*" "It appears, then, that those whom God receives are made righteous no otherwise than as they are purified, by being cleansed from all their defilements, by *the remission of their sins;* so that such a righteousness may be denominated, in one word, a *remission of sins.*"[1]

From these statements it appears that justification and full forgiveness are the same; and hence the sufficiency of the sufferings and death of Christ to procure the one as much as the other. And there is no need of bringing in the personal obedience of Christ in order to make the atonement a sufficient ground of justification. His personal obedience or holiness is indispensably connected with the atonement, as before remarked; so indispensably, that without it no atonement could ever have been made. Still, the atonement itself consisted, not in the obedience of Christ, but in the shedding of his blood.

[1] *Institutes.* Book iii. chap. xi. sect. 21.

We are next to speak of the efficacy of Christ's death, or the manner in which it availed to make an atonement for sin.

Some have believed that, by suffering for us, Christ literally paid our debt to divine justice. So taught Anselm, in the twelfth century, and Aquinas in the thirteenth, and many others of later date, in both the Romish and Protestant churches. But to this theory there are insuperable objections. In the first place, the demands of strict governmental justice against us are not of the nature of a debt, and cannot be cancelled as such. And then, if they were, and if the sufferings of Christ had cancelled them, we should owe nothing to the law. The law would no longer have any demands against us. We should need no forgiveness, nor would forgiveness be possible; as there would be nothing to be forgiven.

Some have said that the death of Christ availed to make an atonement for sinners, not by paying a literal debt, but by his suffering for them the strict and proper penalty of the law. But to this statement, also, there are insuperable objections. The first grows out of the very nature of the penalty in question. This is eternal death,—an eternal separation from God and all good, and the eternal destruction of body and soul in hell. It involves all the agonies of the bottomless pit; not the least part of which are the direct results of indulged sin; the indulgence of the most hateful, painful passions; the stings and reproaches of conscience; dissatisfaction with God and his government; and a perpetual, burning sense of his displeasure. Did our Saviour suffer all these, or any of them? Being perfectly holy, was it possible that he should? How could such a being endure the pains of unsated malice, envy, and revenge? How could he suffer from the stings and reproaches of conscience? In other words, how could he suffer the pains and agonies of the bottomless pit, which go to constitute the proper penalty of the law?

But suppose that Christ did suffer all this. Suppose him to have suffered, not only as much as all his elect would suffer in hell forever, but the very same, "agony for agony, and groan for groan;" would he, even then, have suffered the proper penalty of the law? The penalty of the law is denounced upon the transgressor, and upon no one else. "In the day that thou

eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Such is the language which the law uses, in setting forth its penalty; and we see, from the very terms employed, that the penalty can fall upon none but the transgressor. Another may step in, and endure a full equivalent, and so make a full expiation; but he cannot endure the proper penalty, even though he should suffer in kind and amount the same.

There is yet another objection to the theory before us,—the same as that before considered. If Christ has suffered the full penalty of the law for us, then the law has no further demands against us. We need no forgiveness, nor is forgiveness possible. There is nothing left to be forgiven. Forgiveness is a remission of the incurred penalty of the law. But by the supposition, the penalty has all been endured. It no longer remains to be remitted. God will not exact it twice; nor can he remit it, when it is no longer due.

But it is argued, on the other side, that justice demands the full penalty of the law, which we, by transgression, have incurred; nor will it be satisfied with anything less. Hence, if justice is satisfied in the atonement of Christ, he must have suffered the full penalty of the law. But is justice of such a nature that it can be satisfied with nothing but the infliction of the literal penalty? Does it admit of no substitute, no equivalent? Then it precludes entirely, and always, the exercise of mercy. The demands of justice must, on this ground, be violated, or mercy is impossible.

But we do not so understand the claims of justice; nor can they be so understood by any one who hopes in the mercy of the gospel. The demands of justice are answered when its ends are answered; and these may be as fully answered by a substitute as in the punishment of the transgressor. And when all the ends of justice are thus met and answered; when the honor of the law is sustained, and the authority of the sovereign is fully vindicated; then there is room for the exercise of mercy. Then the penalty of the law may be remitted, and no interest will suffer in consequence. The government is as strong in bestowing pardon, as, under other circumstances, it would be in inflicting punishment. There is no injustice in treating sinners

better than they deserve, when this can be done in consistency with other objects and interests. Injustice rather consists in treating them *worse* than they deserve; a mode of treatment most abhorrent to all the ends and aims of the atonement, and which none will ever receive at the hands of God.

It has been objected again to the views which have been exhibited, that the *veracity* of God is pledged to inflict the penalty of the law, in case of transgression; and if it be not inflicted upon the sinner, it must be upon Christ. There is no other way in which the sinner's salvation can be reconciled with the divine veracity. In reply to this, we would ask, Does the setting forth of the penalty of a law, in the form of a threatening, absolutely bind the veracity of the sovereign to inflict it? If it does, then certainly it binds him to inflict it on the transgressor, and a remission of the penalty is, in every case, a violation of truth. There is no avoiding this conclusion. The law does not merely denounce a penalty, but denounces it upon *the transgressor;* not upon him or a substitute, but upon him only. "The soul that sinneth, *it*," and not some other soul, "shall die." Such is the unequivocal language of law; and if this pledges the veracity of the sovereign, forgiveness is forever impossible. God cannot violate his truth; and if his truth is really pledged in the threatening, it must be executed to the letter; and what sinner can ever be saved?

But does a simple threatening, in all cases, bind the veracity of the sovereign? We think not. A threatening may be so connected with a promise, or be so involved in a covenant, as to pledge veracity; but a simple threatening of law, setting forth the penalty of the law, does not pledge it. The subject is not so understood among men; nor can it be so understood in respect to God. In dispensing pardon, a human government does not necessarily violate its truth; neither does the divine government. Just legislation, like justice itself, implies no necessity for punishment, except as *the ends* of punishment may require it. Let these *ends* be answered, and truth would lose the character of a virtue, if it should now prove a barrier to the free exercise of mercy. "The penalty of a law," says John Howe, "is not to be taken for a *prediction* of what shall be, but

a *commination*, expressing what is deserved, or most justly may be." "They who think otherwise," says Calvin "labor under a delusion as to the meaning of threatenings, which though they affirm simply, contain in them a tacit condition, depending on the result."

But if the sufferings of Christ did not avail to make an atonement, either by paying our debt to justice, or by his suffering the proper penalty of the law for us; how did they avail? In what does their atoning virtue or efficacy consist?

Before directly answering these questions, let us recur to some of the principles laid down in my last Lecture, when speaking of the necessity of an atonement. We then said, "The law of God can be sustained by the infliction of the penalty on all those who have transgressed it. Can it be sustained in any other way? Is any *substitute* for this terrible infliction possible? A full substitute would be a sufficient atonement; but can any such substitute be found?"

It is our happiness to know that such a substitute *has been provided*, in the voluntary sufferings and death of Christ. He endured, not the proper penalty of the law, but a complete governmental *substitute* for the penalty. His sufferings and death in our room and stead as fully sustain the authority of law, as fully meet the demands of justice, as fully answer all the purposes of the divine government, as would the infliction of the penalty itself; and consequently are a complete *substitute* for the penalty; or, in other words, a complete atonement.

It is commonly and justly understood, among evangelical Christians, that Christ's death was *vicarious*, or that he died as a *substitute*. But a substitute, how? And for what? Not that he endured the proper penalty of the law for us, but that he endured an adequate *substitute for that penalty;* so that the penalty itself may now be safely and consistently remitted. Were the penalty all borne, there would be nothing to be remitted. But as it has not been borne, but only a substitute for it; as it has not been removed, but only a way opened in which it may be; there is as much need of forgiveness, and as much to be forgiven, as though the Saviour had not died.

The view here taken, as to the manner in which Christ's death

avails to make an atonement for us, is believed to be the general prevailing sentiment of evangelical Christians on the subject. For though some excellent men have denied it in terms, insisting that Christ did bear the proper penalty of the law, yet, when they come to explain and answer objections, they insensibly fall into the other view, as that alone which will bear a thorough examination. Thus a writer in the late Dr. Green's Christian Advocate says that "the Redeemer did not endure eternal death," but "the infinite dignity of his person imparted to his temporary sufferings a value, that made them a fair and full *equivalent* for the everlasting sufferings of all who shall be finally saved."[1] Dr. Hopkins also, in his excellent chapter on the "Design and Work of the Redeemer," after having said more than once that Christ bore the penalty of the law for us, brings out his real meaning in language such as this: "He suffered the evil threatened, or *as great evil*, a *complete equivalent*, if not precisely the same evil in every circumstance, which the sinner must have suffered had the threatening been executed on him. *All the ends of the threatening and of the penalty are as fully answered by the sufferings of Christ, as they could be by the execution of it on the sinner.*"[2] The younger Edwards, too, says: "The atonement of Christ is a *substitute for the punishment of the sinner*, according to the divine law, and is designed to support the authority of that law equally as the punishment of hell."[3] So Dr. Woods, speaking of the penalty of the law, says: "Christ suffered it *virtually*. He suffered that which had a *like effect*, or which had a *like value* in God's moral government. As to the ends of government, it was as though the curse of the law had been endured literally. So that it is sufficiently correct for common purposes to say, as Storr and Flatt, and a thousand others have said, that Christ endured the penalty of the law; that he suffered the punishment due to sin."[4]

This shows us how Dr. Woods understood those writers who use the phraseology of Storr and Flatt. Indeed, he says that the view we have taken,—Christ suffering not the literal pen-

[1] Vol. for 1826, pp. 388, 389.
[2] *Works*, vol. i. p. 340.
[3] *Works*, vol. ii. p. 38.
[4] *Works*, vol. ii. p. 473.

alty, but *an equivalent, a substitute for it*,—is the only reasonable view; the only one which a sober man can take.[1]

We have now treated of the *necessity* of an atonement, in order to the salvation of sinners; also, of the *nature* and *efficacy* of that atonement which Christ made for us on the cross. Some collateral subjects still remain, which will be considered in the following Lecture.

[1] Some writers of the old school speak of Christ's having endured "a *substituted penalty*;" which means *a substitute for the proper penalty*.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

THE ATONEMENT—COLLATERAL TOPICS.

Having examined, in the two previous Lectures, the more essential features of the atonement of Christ, such as its *necessity*, its *nature*, and its *efficacy*, we now pass to a consideration of some minor collateral questions.

Our first inquiry will be as to the *extent* of the atonement. Is it *universal*, or *particular?* Is it sufficient for all men, or only for the elect?

Without doubt, the atonement was intended to be applied, savingly, only to the elect. In other words, it was certain to the mind of God, from all eternity, that none but the elect would embrace it, and be saved by it. Still, we believe that, as to its *sufficiency*, the atonement is strictly *universal*. We might infer as much as this from the *nature* of the atonement. It is, in its nature, general, unlimited, we had almost said infinite. It *can* be limited by nothing but the good pleasure of him who made it, or by the extent of the race for whom it was made.

Then the Scriptures decide, expressly, that the atonement was made for *all men*. Christ is said to have "died for all" (2 Cor. v. 14). He "gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6). He "tasted death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9). He is "the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2).

Again, the offers of the gospel, which are all based on the atonement, are strictly universal. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Whosoever will, let him come, and take the waters of life freely." It can-

not be supposed that God would offer salvation to those for whom no atonement has been made, and to whom salvation would be impossible, if the offer were accepted. Yet he certainly does offer salvation to all men in the gospel. All, without exception, are invited to come, and partake the waters of life freely.

It should be further considered, that all men are actually receiving benefits, in this life, through the atonement. Our very existence in this world of light and hope, the blessings of Providence we here enjoy, our probation of grace, our means of grace, indeed everything we receive which is better than the perdition of ungodly men,—all is a matter of grace and mercy, and comes to us through the atonement and intercession of Christ. The fact that the non-elect here upon earth are continually receiving blessings through the atonement,—all the blessings that they have ever received, or ever will,—is proof that the atonement was made for them, and is sufficient, if they would only embrace it, for their salvation.

We next inquire for evidence that divine justice is satisfied in the atonement of Christ, and that it has been accepted of the Father. We have proof of this fact, in the divine and perfect *character* of the Saviour. He would not have undertaken that which he had not the intention and the ability to accomplish. He would not have declared the atonement finished, when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost, if it were still unfinished and incomplete.

Again, the Father openly manifested his acceptance of the atonement, by *raising our Saviour from the dead*. Accordingly, Christ is said to have been "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." He is also declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead.

It may be further remarked, that every believer who has been pardoned and saved through the atonement, every justified soul now on earth or in heaven, is a living witness that the atonement has been accepted. Would God have justified any of our fallen race on this ground, and received them back to his favor and love, if justice was not satisfied, and the work of atonement was not complete?

There is yet another inquiry, in this connection, which will demand a more full consideration. How much must Christ have suffered, in order to satisfy divine justice, and make a full atonement for sin? *How much?* Though we may not be able to answer these questions with definiteness *positively*, we may *negatively*. Christ did not suffer the same, either in kind or amount, which all mankind must have suffered in hell, had no atonement been made for them. That he should have suffered the same *in kind* is, in the nature of things, impossible, as we have before seen; for, in order to this, he must have had the feelings of the lost, and been like them in character. And that he suffered the same in amount is also impossible, but upon the supposition that his *divine nature suffered*, and for the time *infinitely*. His whole divinity must have been permeated and filled with suffering. But to an idea like this—too monstrous, almost, to be made the subject of inquiry or thought—there are insuperable objections.

The *causes* of our Saviour's sufferings, as set forth in the Scriptures, all go to limit them to his human nature. A part of them had a *bodily* origin. They grew out of his connection with the body. Such were his sufferings from weariness, faintness, hunger and thirst; from the thorns, the scourge, the nails, and other inflictions, at the time of his crucifixion. But is it likely that *the Deity* suffered in these ways? Was the immensity of the divine nature hungry and thirsty? Was the Almighty God weary? Did the driving of a nail, or the pricking of a thorn, inflict a torture upon the Divinity himself, and thus carry a pang throughout the universe? Who believes as much as this? Who that has any proper sense of the divine attributes and perfections *can* believe it?

A part of our Saviour's sufferings arose from *fear*. As his last agonies approached, he seems to have been appalled in view of them, and to have feared that he should not be able to go through them in a proper manner. In the language of the Psalmist, "fearfulness and trembling came upon him, and horror overwhelmed him" (Ps. lv. 5). "He offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he

feared" (Heb. v. 7). But how is it possible that the divine nature in Christ should have suffered from fear? Of what could it be afraid? Being omniscient, nothing unanticipated could present itself to the divinity within him to awaken fear,—nothing of which he had not had the most perfect knowledge from all eternity. And being almighty and independent, he must have known that nothing could ever injure him, and that he had absolutely nothing of which to be afraid.

Our Saviour also suffered from distressing *temptations*. We read that "he *suffered*, being *tempted;*" and that he "was *tempted* in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. ii. 18; iv. 15). But is it possible that his divine nature suffered in this way? Was God tempted? We read that "God *cannot* be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James i. 13).

But the severest sufferings of our blessed Lord were, undoubtedly, of a *spiritual* nature. For a time, God was pleased to shut out his prayer, and to withhold from him those spiritual supports and consolations, those comforting tokens of the divine favor and love, which he had before enjoyed. "I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" (Ps. xxii. 1, 2). Now these distresses may be conceived of and accounted for, supposing them to have fallen upon *the man* Christ Jesus, while suffering in the stead of sinners. But what possible idea can we frame of them, if we say that they were the sufferings of God himself? Did God the Son cry out, in his distress, to God the Father? Did he cry to him, and not be heard? Did the first person of the Trinity hide his face from the second, withdraw from him all spiritual support and consolation, and thus fill his infinite heart with distress and anguish? Could one person of the Trinity be thus deserted and afflicted, and the whole Godhead not be afflicted? Could the divinity of the Son thus sorely suffer, and the divinity of the Father and the Spirit escape?

But this leads us to consider the question before us, in its bearing on some of the essential *attributes* of God, more especially his *immutability* and his *unchanging happiness*. We do

not believe the Divine Being immutable in such a sense as to divest him of all emotional feeling, and render him incapable of sympathizing with his suffering children. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Without doubt, the Father felt deeply for his suffering Son, while bleeding and dying on the cross. But the theory we are examining goes much further than this. It supposes the Divine Being at a certain period, some thirty-three years after the birth of Christ, to have become, for the time, an *infinite sufferer*. He was tortured with fear. He was assaulted with manifold temptations. He was overwhelmed with the most distressing thoughts, the most painful apprehensions. And not only so, he had put himself in such connection with a human body, as to suffer immensely from that source. In short, so filled was the infinity of the divine nature, at that period, with suffering, that it endured as much, in the course of a few hours, as all the elect of God would have suffered in hell forever. Now, waiving all other objections to this monstrous theory, I would ask, how can it be reconciled with the idea of God's *unchangeableness;* and especially with that of his unchangeable and perfect *happiness?* That God is unchangeably and perfectly happy is clearly taught in the Scriptures, and is the assured belief of all who bear the Christian name. But how is it possible to reconcile this glorious attribute with the supposed suffering of the divine nature at the time of the crucifixion? According to this theory, there *was* a change in God at that time; a mighty change; a most painful and dreadful change. He did not merely sympathize with the sufferer on Calvary, but was himself *the sufferer*. The agonies of the garden, the tortures of crucifixion, he literally felt in his own divine nature. It would seem that his happiness, for the time, must have been, not marred, but *destroyed*. The immensity of his being must have been filled with anguish.

But it is needless to argue this question farther. The Scriptures have decided it beyond a reasonable doubt. They teach, in a variety of ways, that the sufferings of Christ were those of *a man*. We are assured, in the first place, that Christ became a man *that he might suffer*. He "was made a little lower than the angels,"—in other words, he was made man,—"for the

suffering of death . . that he, by the grace of God, should *taste death for every man*" (Heb. ii. 9). "Forasmuch, then, as the children are made partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that *through death* he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. ii. 14).

The Scriptures affirm, positively, that Christ suffered *as a man*. He was "a *man* of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Is. liii. 3). "Being found in fashion as *a man*, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto *death*, even *the death of the cross*" (Phil. ii. 8).

The human character of Christ's sufferings is further indicated, in that he is so often said to have suffered in his *body*. "Who himself bare our sins in his *own body* on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24). "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but *a body* hast thou prepared me. . . . Then I said, Lo, I come! in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God! . . . By which will we are sanctified, through the offering of *the body* of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x. 5–10).

Christ is also said to have suffered *in the flesh*, or, which is the same, in his human nature. "Being put to death *in the flesh*, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pet. iii. 18). "Forasmuch, then, as Christ hath suffered for us *in the flesh*, arm yourselves, likewise, with the same mind" (1 Pet. iv. 1). "You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in *the body of his flesh*, through death" (Col. i. 21).

I have spent the more time on this question, not only on account of its intrinsic importance, but because the theory of a *suffering God*, who endured as much for his elect as they must have endured in hell forever, has within a few years been publicly and strenously urged upon us.[1] I have endeavored to show, in as few words as possible, that such a doctrine cannot be true It conflicts with all our ideas of the attributes and perfections of God. It contradicts the plain teachings of the Bible. Our Saviour suffered *as a man;* yet not as a *mere* man, but as

[1] See, in particular, a work entitled "*Sufferings of Christ*," by a Layman, published in 1845.

one in whom "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." They were the sufferings of a man in personal union with the Deity, and who was sustained by that union to endure what otherwise would have crushed him in a moment. It is a mistake to suppose that our beloved Lord, in his last agonies, endured no more than a mere man would have done, in the same time. From the very nature of the case, he must have suffered inconceivably more. And then it is perfectly evident, from his appearance in the garden, from the shrinking of his human nature in view of the scenes before him, that his sufferings must have been, to the last degree, dreadful.

It is sometimes said that our Lord did not meet his death with as much firmness as some of the martyrs have shown under the like circumstances. But there is no comparison between the two cases. Our Saviour did not die as a mere martyr. The chief causes of his sufferings, their attendant circumstances, the amazing issues depending, the great ends to be answered,—all were different, and all in his case peculiar. I can conceive that our Saviour suffered more in a few hours than any martyr could have suffered in as many years. He suffered more, I have no doubt, than mere unassisted human nature could have sustained for a moment. He suffered enough, considering the infinite dignity and glory of his person, and his ineffable nearness to the Father,—enough to satisfy the justice of God, and answer all those purposes, in the divine government, which could have been answered by the destruction of our race. They were enough to declare, most adequately and fully, God's "*righteousness* for the remission of sins that are past, . . . that he might be *just* and *the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.*" In other words, he suffered enough to make a full and complete atonement for sin, with which the Father is satisfied, and which he has publicly accepted.

The more common objections to the doctrine of the atonement have been anticipated, and need not detain us long. It is sometimes said that an atonement for sin was *not necessary;* that God could consistently pardon the penitent, returning soul, without a bloody expiation. But this objection has been considered,

and the necessity of an atonement fully set forth, in a previous Lecture.

It has been said, again, that the infliction of so much suffering, and a violent death upon the holy Son of God, was *unjust*. This objection would be valid, had the sufferings of Christ been visited upon him against his will, or without his consent. But neither of these suppositions is true. Our blessed Lord was throughout a voluntary sufferer. Of his own accord, he took upon himself our nature, appeared in our world, and suffered and died for us on the cross. It was in reference to this painful sacrifice, that we hear him saying, "Lo, I come! in the volume of the book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will, O my God!" "No man taketh my life from me, but *I lay it down of myself*." "The Son of man is come, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to *give his life a ransom for many*."

It is insisted, after all, that the atonement is an *unreasonable doctrine*. There was no adequate call for such a sacrifice; no exigency sufficiently great and appalling to demand it. Those who urge this objection seem not to understand at all the peculiar exigency of the case. With their views of human nature and character, how should they understand it? But let them, for once, look into the Bible, and learn what that says as to the natural state and character of man; a world full of sinners,—a world in ruins,—all the countless myriads that have lived in past ages, are living now, or shall live to the end of time;—all under sentence of eternal death, and hanging together over the pit of destruction; let them look at the subject in this light (and this is the light in which the Bible presents it), and see if there is not an exigency sufficiently great and appalling, to call for the interposition of the Son of God. The death of Christ, we know, was a wonderful event,—the most wonderful that ever transpired beneath the sun,—so wonderful as to transcend all human conception, and at times almost to stagger our faith. But when we consider the vastness of the objects to be attained by his death, and which could be attained in no other way,—a foundation of hope laid, and a door of mercy opened for a ruined world,—myriads upon myriads of immortal beings res-

cued from the jaws of eternal death, and raised to eternal glory and bliss in heaven,—while the character of God is at the same time illustrated, and his glory displayed in the highest degree; when we look at the subject in this light, and ponder it, and dwell upon it, we no longer wonder at the death of Christ. We see that there was a cause, a sufficient cause; and are satisfied that this most glorious display of divine love and mercy was as reasonable as it was necessary and just.

As to the importance of the doctrine which has been discussed in this and the two previous Lectures, it is difficult to speak in terms of sufficient strength. It is of vast interest and importance in itself. It is important in all its relations and consequences. It is the grand central doctrine of the whole Christian system, without which the rest would lose its significance, and the system could not be held together. It is the groundwork of that probation of grace on which the human family are now placed; and all the mercies which come to us while here on trial,—the blessings of Providence which we here enjoy, the means of grace, the strivings and influences of the Holy Spirit, —everything indeed which makes existence desirable, may be traced back consequentially to the atonement of Christ. It stretches its influence beyond the grave, and is the foundation of all the hopes which are centred there. It is the corner-stone of Zion, on which the whole church of God rests, and will rest forever.

The atonement is a subject which interests, not our world only, but the entire moral universe, and will do so eternally. Angels are looking into it with admiring attention, and the whole upper world are engaged together, in celebrating its wonders and glories. The countless myriads of the blessed in heaven know vastly more of the Supreme Being, they love him better, they enjoy him more, they will be unspeakably more happy to all eternity than they could have been had not a Saviour died.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

Intimately connected with the atonement of Christ is his intercession. The former work was accomplished on earth; the latter is now in progress in heaven. The Saviour died upon the cross; he rose triumphant from the dead; he has gone into the heavens; and there "he ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25).

This work of intercession, like that of the atonement, belongs to the *priestly office* of Christ, and was clearly typified under the former dispensation, by a part of the service of the high-priest. The priest in Israel went daily into the *holy place*, accomplishing the service of God; but into the *most holy place*, within the veil, none went but the high-priest, and he only once in a year. He here sprinkled the mercy-seat with the blood of atonement, and burned incense before the Lord (Lev. xvi.). "But Christ," says the apostle, "being a high-priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." And again: "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true, but into *heaven itself*, there to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24).

It is certain from these passages, that that part of the service of the high-priest to which we have referred,—the most solemn and awful of all his services,—was typical of the intercession of Christ in heaven. In prosecuting the subject before us, I propose,—

I. To point out some of the ways in which Christ intercedes.

II. Show for whom he intercedes. And,

III. Speak of the benefits of his intercession.

I. *How*, or in *what ways*, does Christ carry on his work of intercession in heaven? For an answer to this question, we are dependent entirely on revelation. Reason can add nothing but conjecture, and hardly that, to what the Scriptures have taught us on the subject. I remark,—

1. Christ intercedes in heaven, *by appearing there with the blood of atonement*, which has been shed for men. As the high-priest in Israel went into the most holy place with the blood of atonement, so our great High-Priest has gone into the heavens, with his more precious blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us. He appears there as a Lamb that has been slain. He appears there with his scars and wounds, and sprinkles the mercy-seat above with his own blood. Nor is this blood a silent, inoperative thing. It has a tongue, and it speaks. It "speaketh better things than the blood of Abel" (Heb. xii. 24). Abel's blood cried from the ground for vengeance upon the head of the murderer. But the blood of Christ pleads for mercy to the guilty.

It once happened, in the history of Rome, that a young soldier had committed some offence, for which he was condemned to die. By the laws of war his life was forfeited, and there was no hope for him. But he had a brother in the army who had lost both hands in a recent battle; and he undertook to plead for the offender's life. And how did he plead? Not by asserting his brother's innocence, or complaining of the laws and usages of war by which he had been condemned. Not, in fact, by speaking a word, or opening his lips on his behalf. But he urged his way into the presence of the commanding officer, and held up the stumps of his arms before him. And this was enough. These bleeding, handless, useless stumps—rendered useless in his country's service—had a tongue, a voice. They pleaded louder and more effectively than words could plead. The offending brother was forgiven, and restored to favor.

And thus it is that our Saviour intercedes for us in heaven. He appears there with his scarred hands and feet, and his

wounded side, and sprinkles the mercy-seat above with his own precious blood.

"If justice calls for sinners' blood,
The Saviour shows his own."

2. Christ intercedes in heaven, by offering up *literal prayers*, or *supplicating blessings* for his people. So the matter was understood by the early Christian fathers, and by the older Protestant commentators. A different view has been taken by some recent interpreters, but the testimony of Scripture is against them.

In the first place, I know of no objection to Christ's offering up literal prayers in heaven, more than to his engaging in such a service while here in the world. He was God on earth, as he is now in heaven. He was Mediator and King in Zion while with us in the flesh, as he is now in glory. And though, as a man, he has not the same *personal* necessities that he once had, his people, who are the special objects of his intercession, are as needy as ever, and require his prayers as much as when he tabernacled with them.

In this view, the supposition that Christ literally intercedes in heaven is a very *reasonable* one. He is now near the Father, in his immediate presence, at his right hand, and has continued and delightful intercourse with him. No intercourse can be conceived of as more intimate and happy than that subsisting between the Father and the Son in heaven. And here are his needy and often afflicted people. They are warring with temptation, contending against sin, and toiling on, through scenes of danger, suffering, and conflict, towards their eternal home. Christ loves his people with an unchanging love. He thinks of them; he feels and cares for them; and what more reasonable supposition than that, in his intercourse with the Father, he should bring their necessities before him, and make requests on their behalf?

And this is obviously the *scriptural* view of the case. As remarked already, the intercession of Christ in heaven was typified by the solemn service of the high-priest in Israel, on the great day of atonement. And in this typical service, the fact of our Saviour's offering up *prayers* in heaven was clearly indi-

cated. The high-priest went into the most holy place, not only with the blood of atonement, but with *incense*. He was directed to "take a censer full of burning coals from the alter before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense, and bring it within the veil, and to put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the smoke of the incense might cover the mercy-seat" (Lev. xvi. 12). Whether the priest literally prayed, in the performance of this service, we are not informed; but the incense which he offered was the known *symbol of prayer*. "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as *incense*, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Ps. cxxi. 2). The four and twenty elders "fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors (or incense) which are *the prayers of saints*" (Rev. v. 8). Thus the incense which the high-priest offered in the most holy place was a symbolic representation of prayer; and, in accordance with this typical service on earth, we are to suppose that our great High-Priest offers up the incense of his intercession in heaven. In other words, we are to suppose that he literally *prays* in heaven; else there is nothing in his intercessory work to answer to the incense of the Jewish priest, and it is unaccountable that the offering of incense should have been appointed.

That our Saviour prays for his people in heaven is evident from several passages in the New Testament. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also *maketh intercession for us*" (Rom. viii. 33). "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make *intercession* for them" (Heb. vii. 25). The original word is the same in both these passages, and is properly rendered to *make intercession*. Paul uses the same word when he says: "Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias, how he *maketh intercession* to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets," etc. (Rom. xi. 2). A substantive from the same verb is used in Timothy: "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, *intercessions*, and giving of thanks be made for all men" (1 Tim. ii. 1). In

both these cases, the word is used in reference to prayer. In short, this is the common use of the word in the sacred writings, and it is faithfully rendered by our translators, to *make intercession.*

There is another term, by which the intercession of Christ is set forth, which carries with it the same idea. "If any man sin, we have an *advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii. 1). The word here rendered advocate properly signifies an *intercessor*,—one who pleads for another, as a lawyer for his client. So our Saviour pleads for his people in heaven; more especially for their recovery and forgiveness when they fall into sin.

I may add, that our Saviour promised his disciples, just before he left them, that he would *pray for them;* which must mean, apparently, that he would pray for them in heaven. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John xiv. 16). We have no evidence that Christ fulfilled this promise previous to his ascension, but have much reason to believe that he fulfilled it afterwards; since it was several days after the ascension of Christ that the prayer was answered, and the Holy Spirit came.

On the whole, I must believe that Christ intercedes in heaven by offering up *literal prayers* or *making requests* for his people; and that this may be regarded as the second mode of his intercession.

3. A third mode of Christ's intercession consists in his presenting before the throne of his Father the accepted and purified prayers of his people. This mode, like both the preceding, was typified in the services of the ancient temple. While the priest went in with his censer, to appear before God, "the multitude of the people were *praying without*, at the time of incense" (Luke i. 10). Consequently, their prayers went up in connection with the incense of the priest. So the prayers of Christians in this lower world ascend up to heaven perfumed with the incense of a Saviour's intercessions.

All this is clearly represented in one of the visions of the Apostle John: "Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much

incense, that he should offer it, *with the prayers of all saints*, upon the golden altar that was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came *with the prayers of saints*, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand" (Rev. viii. 3). This angel, we must suppose, was either Christ himself, or his representative. The incense which he offered denoted the intercession of Christ; and this ascended up before God *with the prayers of saints*. We may conclude, then, that it is one part of the intercessory work of Christ to present before God the prayers of his people. The sins and imperfections which mingle with their prayers being washed away in his atoning blood, he presents their purified and now acceptable worship before the throne of his Father in heaven.

This mode of Christ's intercession, like almost everything else pertaining to the soul's salvation, is beautifully set forth in Bunyan's inimitable allegory of the Holy War. In their distress, at a certain time, the Mansoulians agreed to send a petition to the court of Shaddai, the great King, praying for more help. When their petition had been prepared and brought to the King's palace, it was delivered into the hands of his son. "So he took it, and read it; and because the contents of it pleased him well, *he mended it*, and also in some things *added to the petition himself*. So, after he had made such *amendments* and *additions* as he thought convenient, with his own hand, he carried it to the King; to whom, when he had with obeisance delivered it, he put on authority, and spoke to it himself." Thus the Saviour takes our poor prayers, perfects them with his own hand, perfumes them with the incense of his intercession, and then they are accepted with the Father.

The Apostle Paul has reference to this mode of our Saviour's intercession, when he says that we can have access to God in prayer only *through Christ*. "Through whom we have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18). The same is also intimated by Christ himself, when he directs his followers to offer their prayers *in his name*. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my name*, he will do it." Praying in Christ's name implies that we depend, not only on his atonement for pardon,

but on his intercession for the presentment and acceptance of our worship.

4. Still another mode of Christ's intercession for his people in heaven (if it be another) consists in his refuting and removing all *the charges* and *allegations* which are there brought against them. This mode of intercession is set forth, perhaps, in the third chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah. The prophet, in his vision, sees Joshua, the high-priest, who had returned with the exiles from Babylon, standing before the angel of the Lord (who represents Christ), and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. Satan does accuse him of being clad with filthy garments; or, in other words, of being polluted with the errors and sins of Babylon. The Lord, or (as the Syriac renders it) the angel of the Lord, who is Christ, replies to this accusation, and pleads with his Father to rebuke the adversary. "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord, that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" As though he had said, "Thou knowest, O Father, the sore trial through which thy servant Joshua has passed; that he has been drawn, as it were, from the dust and ashes of the fire. How then should it be expected that his garments should not be defiled? Dwelling so long far away from the ordinances of thine house, among the abominations of an idolatrous city, how could it be expected that he should not be ignorant, in some measure, of the orders of thine house, and be infected with the influence of a corrupting example? Still, he is thy penitent servant; and I pray thee to forgive his sins, remove his filthy garments, and rebuke this merciless adversary." Thus our compassionate Redeemer is represented as interceding, in this instance; and how happy the result! The adversary is rebuked; the filthy garments of Joshua are taken away; his iniquities are purged; he stands accepted before God, and receives a promise of the richest blessings.

The Apostle Paul gives the same view of the intercession of Christ in a passage already quoted, where he represents it as a principal reason why no *charges* can be substantiated against God's elect, that Christ has risen from the dead and ever liveth to make intercession for them in heaven (Rom. viii. 33, 34).

The same idea is conveyed also by John, when he speaks of Christ as our *Advocate* with the Father. "If any man sin," and by sinning furnishes ground of charge or accusation, "we have an *Advocate* with the Father" (1 John ii. 1). As it belongs to the advocate to defend his client, and answer to the charges brought against him; so Christ intercedes for his people in heaven, takes care of their interests, manages their cause before God, and answers to the accusations which are preferred against them.

I have now exhibited several distinct modes in which Christ may be said to intercede in heaven. It was proposed to inquire,—

II. For whom he intercedes. This question has been answered, in part, already. There can be no doubt that Christ intercedes for *his people*,—his toiling, suffering, afflicted people on the earth. All that is said of his intercession in the Scriptures gives us this view of it. All the examples of his intercession do the same. We may be sure, therefore, that Christ's covenant people—those who have believed in him, and committed themselves to his hands—are the peculiar objects of his intercession before the throne of God.

But are these the *only* objects? Does not his advocacy, at least in some of its forms, reach farther than this? We have reason to believe that Christ intercedes, not only for his *present* people, but *for all who shall ever become his people;* in other words, for all *his elect*. In that memorable prayer, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John,—which may be taken as a pattern of his intercessions above,—we hear him pleading for all those who, in time to come, should believe on his name. "Neither pray I for these alone, but *for them also which shall believe on me through their word*, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee."

Nor would we limit the intercession of Christ altogether to his elect. In the first mode of it of which we spoke,—the presentation of his atoning blood before the mercy-seat in heaven,—the intercession of Christ must be coëxtensive with his atonement. In other words, it must be, in a sense, for *all men*. All who have any interest in the atonement of Christ must have an

equal interest in this first mode of his intercession. The fact, too, that sinners, incorrigible sinners, those who never embrace the truth, are receiving blessings continually, in this life, through the atonement and intercession of Christ,—the blessings of providence, the day and the means of grace, the strivings and influences of the Holy Spirit,—is proof positive that the intercession of Christ, at least in the form of it first contemplated, reaches to them. In this sense, it must extend to the whole human race,—all those for whom Christ died.

III. We now proceed to our third and last inquiry, which has respect to the *benefits* resulting to Christians, and to the world, from the intercession of Christ.

On this point, the Scriptures have positively decided in respect to some things. Thus we know that the Holy Spirit, in his more special and copious effusions, is sent in consequence of our Saviour's intercessions. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John xiv. 16). And who shall estimate the blessings which have come upon the world in consequence of the outpourings of the Holy Spirit? Until we can compute all the blessings of salvation,—the worth of all the souls that have ever been saved, or ever will be, the benefits of Christ's intercession, only in this view of it, can never be estimated.

We know, too, that the gift of miracles, in the primitive church, was conferred in the same way. "The works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do, *because I go to my Father*,"—because I go to intercede for you in heaven (John xiv. 12).

The *forgiveness of sins*, and the *final salvation of the soul*, are also conferred through Christ's intercession. "He is able to *save to the uttermost* all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25).

Again: the varied blessings which we receive, in answer to our own prayers, and the prayers of others, may all be traced to the intercession of Christ; since it is only through his intercession that our prayers can reach the throne of heaven, and be accepted.

Indeed, *all* the blessings which are enjoyed on the earth may

be regarded as coming to us in consequence of the Saviour's intercession. All flow to us, obviously, through the atonement; and what is it that gives such efficacy to atoning blood? Is it not that Christ has gone with it into the heavens, to sprinkle with it the mercy-seat above,—to present and plead it before the throne of his Father? The intercession of Christ is the *carrying out*, the *consummation*, so to speak, of his atonement; and hence all the blessings resulting to us from his atonement should also be considered as standing connected with his intercession. And who shall estimate the number or the value of these? Our very probation of grace, and all the blessings pertaining to our present probation; our food, our raiment, our friends, our homes, the very air we breathe, and all the blessings of providence we enjoy; our Bibles, our Sabbaths, our sanctuary privileges; the offers, the hopes, the consolations of the gospel; everything, in fact, which we receive, which is better than that perdition which we deserve,—all comes to us through the interposition, the atonement, the prevalent intercession of our glorified Redeemer.

How important, then, to the world is the intercession of Christ! How stupendous and incalculable are the blessings resulting from it; including, even to those who finally perish, all their earthly favors and comforts, and, to those who are saved, the inconceivable, unutterable blessings of an endless life!

This subject is one of great interest and encouragement, every way, to the people of God. It is fitted to encourage them in the duty of *prayer*. They are not obliged to stand unaided and alone before the throne of a just and holy God; but an all-powerful Mediator has been provided. They have an advocate with the Father. Their great Intercessor stands ready to receive their petitions, to purify and present their prayers, and make them acceptable in the sight of Heaven. They may, therefore, "come boldly to the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need."

Let them, also, be encouraged under temptations and trials, and in seasons of doubt, despondency, and darkness. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? . . . It is

Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again; who also *maketh intercession for us.*" The people of God are indeed beset with fierce accusers,—an accusing conscience, an accusing law, and an accusing devil, who "goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." But let them not be dismayed. Their Redeemer is strong; he is at the right hand of God; he ever liveth to make intercession for them. And this is one part of his intercession: to answer all the charges which are brought against them; to refute and silence the accusations of their enemies. The children of God, then, have no reason to be dismayed. They shall never be deserted. Their Redeemer is able to save, to *the uttermost*, all who come unto God by him.

By all the considerations which the subject suggests, the followers of Christ should be encouraged and engaged to untiring *fidelity* in the service of their Lord and Master. As he is ever mindful of them, let them never forget and forsake him. As he has gone to appear in the presence of God for them, so let them be ready, under all circumstances and at all times, to appear openly for him, before an unbelieving and an ungodly world. And as he ever liveth to make intercession for them, so they should ever live in obedience to his will, and in a faithful devotion to his cause and service. "A thousand obligations bind their hearts to grateful love." Let them ever be mindful of these obligations; let them live and act under their influence; and thus may they be growing in all goodness and usefulness, and be training up in a preparation to meet their Saviour in the heavens.

LECTURE XL.

THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

HAVING considered already the atonement and intercession of Christ,—the grand foundation of the sinner's hope,—the next subject in order is the *covenant of grace*. This is the covenant which, on the ground of the atonement, God is graciously holding out to a ruined world. It contains the promises of pardon and eternal life, through Christ, and the conditions on which sinners may become interested in these promises, to the salvation of their souls.

The word *covenant* is used with considerable variety of signification in the Scriptures. It sometimes signifies a simple *promise*. Thus the covenant with Noah was an absolute promise to him and his descendants, that the earth should no more be destroyed by a flood (Gen. ix. 9–17). The same word is sometimes used to signify *law*. It is in this sense that the ten commandments are called God's *covenant* (Deut. iv. 13). And when we read—not in the Scriptures, but in books of theology—of the covenant with Adam and the covenant of works, the term is used in much the same sense. A covenant of works is but another name for law. The purport of both is, "obey and live; transgress and die."

A covenant, properly speaking, is an *agreement*, a *compact*, between two or more persons or parties, containing conditions to be complied with, and promises to be fulfilled upon compliance. "If you will do so and so, I will do so and so." In this sense the term is used in the Scriptures. In this sense it is used when we speak of the *covenant of grace*.

Before treating directly of the covenant of grace, it will be necessary to distinguish it from another covenant, with which it

has sometimes been confounded,—I mean the covenant of *redemption*. By the covenant of redemption we understand the general *plan* of redemption, formed in eternity, and comprising the several parts to be performed in this διαθηκην, *arrangement* or *plan*, by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. According to this plan, the Father is first in office,—the grand executive head in the divine government, whose official work it is to administer the laws and sustain the honors of the eternal throne. That these honors may be sustained, and yet sinners be saved, the Father proposes to the Son to act as Mediator between himself and them; to take upon himself human nature; to die in the place of sinners; to become their teacher, their example, their advocate, their atoning priest and intercessor. He promises him a vast number of our lost race, as the blessed fruits of his mediation; and that he may secure the salvation of this number, the Father proposes, for a time, to place his Son on a mediatorial throne, and to commit all power in heaven and on earth to his hands.

To these proposals of the Father the eternal Son consents. "Then he said, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I come to do thy will, O God!" (Heb. x. 7.) "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John vi. 38). The Son voluntarily engages to do and to suffer all that is necessary for the salvation of sinners, and to receive a seed to serve him, as his reward.

But to complete this great work of redemption, another agency is requisite; and the Father and Son propose that the *divine Spirit* shall bear a part with them. The Spirit must descend, by his special operations, to enlighten the dark minds of men, to awaken their consciences, to subdue their wills, to melt and break their hard hearts. He must come and apply the motives of the gospel, and make them effectual. He must exert all that spiritual influence which is necessary, in order to bring in the whole number of God's elect, and prepare them for glory. To this the divine Spirit consents; and thus the whole plan of redemption is settled, and the eternal covenant of redemption is formed.

As this plan or covenant of redemption was formed in eter-

nity, the order implied in the above statement is the supposed order of nature, and not of time. I have endeavored that the whole statement should be conformed to the current and popular representations of Scripture, in regard to this mysterious subject.

This great scheme of redemption is not fully exhibited in any one passage of the sacred writings. Of course, it could not be. But it is referred to and implied in a variety of passages. It is implied in all those Scriptures in which the persons of the Trinity are represented as performing distinct parts in the work of redemption; since whatever they perform in time, it was doubtless their plan or covenant to perform in eternity. There is a reference to the covenant of redemption in those numerous passages, in which the Son is represented as acting in subordination to the Father,—coming in his name, speaking and working by his authority,—and receiving from him power; also in those passages in which the Father is said to have sent the Son, established him, committed to him a kingdom, and given him a certain portion of the human race. Passages of this last description are of frequent occurrence in the teachings of the Saviour. How often do we hear him speaking of those whom his Father had given him!

The covenant of redemption is also referred to in those Scriptures in which the Spirit is said to proceed from the Father and the Son, and to operate officially in subordination to them. It would be needless to quote particular passages. Those who would find evidence of the eternal covenant of redemption in the Scriptures may consult the second, the eighty-ninth, and the hundred and tenth Psalms; the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah; Christ's closing address to his disciples, and his prayer with them, recorded in the latter part of John's Gospel; and many of the quotations from the Old Testament, in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Such, then, is the eternal covenant of redemption. The *covenant of grace*, like everything else pertaining to the salvation of sinners, is founded on this covenant of redemption, grows out of it, and in some respects may be considered as included in it. In other respects, however, it is very different from it, and

requires to be carefully distinguished. The principal points of distinction are the two following: 1. The covenant of redemption subsists between the three persons of the Trinity; the covenant of grace between God and repenting sinners. 2. The covenant of redemption was entered into from all eternity; the covenant of grace is proposed and is accepted or rejected in time.

The covenant of grace is founded on the atonement of Christ, and contains the *terms* or *conditions* on which, through Christ, God will pardon and save sinners. It is summarily expressed in the following manner, and nearly in the language of the inspired writings: "Repent, and ye shall be forgiven. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Return to me, and I will return to you. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever." This, it will be perceived, is the language of covenant. Here are conditions proposed, and promises annexed, as in every proper covenant there must be.

In regard to these conditions, however, two things require to be said:

1. It is not left optional with us whether we shall be under obligations to comply with them. In covenants of human origin, this is often the case. Those to whom the covenant or agreement is proposed are under no anterior obligations to comply with its conditions. Whether they comply or not, they violate no existing obligation, and commit no sin. But not so in the covenant before us. God has not suspended our *duty* in the case upon our own decision. We are *bound* to repent, whether we repent or not; and we *should be* bound to exercise repentance, even if God had not made it one of the conditions of his covenant, and if nothing were to be gained by our repenting. And so of the other conditions of the covenant of grace. Irrespective of their connection with the covenant, it is our duty to comply with them. They are made the subjects of *command*, as well as of condition. "God now *commandeth* all men everywhere to repent." He commands impenitent men to submit to his authority, to return to their duty, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. It is a high recommendation of the

covenant of grace, that God requires in it, as the condition of pardon, no painful penance, no costly sacrifice, no more than we should be under indispensable obligations to render, even if no forgiveness was promised, and nothing was to be gained by a compliance.

2. My second remark in respect to the conditions of the covenant of grace is, that by complying with them, we *merit nothing*. We merely return to him from whom we ought never to have wandered. We are still unprofitable servants, doing only what it is our duty to do. So far from meriting anything, in complying with the conditions of the covenant of grace, our very act of compliance is itself a renunciation of all merit. It is a ceasing from all reliance on this, or any other act of our own,—all that we have ever done, or can do, as a ground of hope,—and putting our trust in Christ alone for pardon and salvation.

The covenant of grace began to be promulgated in the first gospel promise that was given to the world. It was published all along under the former dispensation, by every altar that smoked, by every prophet that preached, by every inspired poet that sung. It was proclaimed and urged, in a thousand forms, by our blessed Saviour and his apostles. It was published by all those holy men, who spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It has been published, with more or less of distinctness, through all the intervening ages. It is sounded forth, at the present day, wherever the Bible is read or the gospel is preached. The great business of the gospel minister now is, to propose, explain, and urge the conditions of salvation; or, in other words, to publish the covenant of grace. The moment the sinner enters heartily into this covenant, and begins to comply with its conditions,—and this he does in the first moment of regeneration,—he becomes entitled to its proffered blessings. His sins are forgiven, and his salvation is sure.

The covenant of which we here speak is appropriately called *the covenant of grace*, because everything pertaining to it, from beginning to end, is *wholly of grace*. Its foundation, in the eternal covenant of redemption, and in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, its conditions, its promises, its methods of

administration, its everlasting rewards, — in short, all that pertains to it, from the foundation to the top-stone, is entirely of grace. Most fitly, therefore, is it denominated *the covenant of grace.*

It has sometimes been inquired, whether the covenants of the visible church in all ages—the covenant with Abraham, the covenant at Sinai, and the covenants of our churches under the gospel,—are not the covenant of grace. To this we answer: The covenant of God's visible church on earth is not properly *the* covenant of grace, and yet it *includes* the covenant of grace. No constitution or covenant, which does not include the covenant of grace, can be regarded as a church covenant, or can constitute the body adopting it and entering into it a proper visible church. And this, by the way, is a sure criterion by which to determine whether a body, calling itself a church, is, in reality, a church of Christ. Does its covenant include the covenant of grace? Do those who enter into it profess to have acceded to the covenant of grace, or, in other words, to be truly pious persons? If so, it should be regarded as a church of Christ. If otherwise, not.

It is in this way we decide that the congregation of Israel was a church of the living God. Their covenant—the covenant with Abraham, which was renewed with great solemnity at Sinai —was a gracious covenant. It included, obviously, the covenant of grace. "Thou hast avouched the Lord, this day, to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken to his voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments, and that thou mayest be a holy people unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. xxvi. 17).

No person could be a true member of the church of Israel, and not be a pious person, more than he can be a true member of one of our evangelical churches without piety. Every member of the church of Israel, who went to the Passover and the other festivals,—who observed its ordinances and rites,—was of necessity either a pious person or a hypocrite.

It is by the same rule we decide that a temperance society, or

any other society for the reformation of morals, is *not* a church of Christ. Its constitution does *not* include the covenant of grace. Persons may honestly join such a society,—they may enter into it according to the spirit of its constitution, and yet not be pious persons.

I have said that every visible church covenant must contain the covenant of grace. It must contain something more than this,—some outward token or tokens; something to give *visibility* to the church. Thus the covenant with Abraham required circumcision; the renewed covenant at Sinai required, besides circumcision, the Passover and other festivals and rites; while our church covenants require baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We thus see that these covenants, although they include the covenant of grace, are not themselves *the* covenant of grace. They require visible tokens, which the simple covenant of grace does not. Persons may enter the covenant of grace, and never enter the covenant of the visible church. In other words, they may become true Christians, and yet, owing to peculiar hindrances, may never join themselves to the professed people of God. On the other hand, persons may *ostensibly* enter into the covenant of the church, or may *profess* to enter it, and yet not enter the covenant of grace.

What a blessing to a lost world—a blessing never to be duly estimated—is this covenant of grace! How should it be hailed and welcomed everywhere with thanksgiving and the voice of praise! How joyfully, *instantly*, should it be accepted and embraced, that so its promises may be realized and its everlasting blessings secured!

Among the astonishing things which the eye of Heaven witnesses on the earth, this is, perhaps, most of all astonishing, that the covenant of grace should be so long and so generally rejected; that such multitudes of ruined creatures, to whom its blessings are freely proffered, should live and die out of it, and perish in their sins.

LECTURE XLI.

REGENERATION.

THE subject of our last Lecture was *the covenant of grace*. In no way can a sinner become interested in this gracious covenant, but by *regeneration*. I am naturally led, therefore, to bring before you, at this time, the important subject of *regeneration*.

In treating of it, I propose to consider, first, the *necessity*, secondly the *nature*, and thirdly, the *causes* of this great spiritual change.

In our Saviour's conversation with Nicodemus he asserts, no less than three times, the necessity of the new birth, or regeneration. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "Marvel not that I said unto you, *Ye must be born again*" (John iii. 3–7).

And what our Saviour thus solemnly asserts, is confirmed by every day's observation. When we consider, on the one hand, what heaven is,—a place of unsullied purity, of perfect holiness, of perpetual and untiring devotion; and when, on the other hand, we look around us, and see what mankind are naturally,—selfish, proud, worldly, malicious, thoughtless of God and divine things, hateful and hating one another; we see, at once, that the two never can come together. There must be a change somewhere; and as the heaven of God's holiness cannot be changed,—cannot be brought down to meet the views of depraved, corrupted mortals,—it follows that these mortals must themselves be changed. They must become new creatures in Christ Jesus, or they can never go to heaven and be happy.

Our Saviour's declaration to Nicodemus is true, because he said it. And it would have been true if he never had said it. It is true, in the very nature of things. It is one of the plainest and most obvious truths in the world. Men must be changed in the spirit of their minds, they must become new and holy creatures, or a holy heaven is to them impossible. They can never gain admittance there; nor, if admitted, would it be any heaven to them. They could not enjoy it, or so much as endure it.

The reason why a change so deep and radical as to be properly denominated a *regeneration* is necessary for us, lies in the fact of our *entire sinfulness* by nature. If we had naturally no moral character, or if our characters were perfectly or *partially* holy, we should not need regeneration. If our moral characters were (as some believe) of a mixed nature, partly holy and partly sinful, we might need reforming, but not renewing. We might need to be amended and improved, but not to be born again. It is the fact of our *total natural depravity*, our *entire sinfulness*, —"every imagination and thought of our heart being only evil, and that continually,"—which renders it indispensable that we should be *regenerated*, in order to see the kingdom of God.

But if regeneration is so necessary for us, in order to go to heaven, the question is one of surpassing interest: *What is regeneration?* What are we to think of that change which all must experience, or never see the kingdom of God?

With regard to the nature of regeneration, different opinions have been entertained, some of which it will be necessary to examine.

Some have said that regeneration is the same as baptism. This notion appeared early in the church of Christ; the fathers mistaking the sign for the thing signified. It is still insisted on by Roman Catholics and high-church Episcopalians. We find the doctrine of baptismal regeneration in the liturgies of the American Episcopal Church, and of the Church of England.

But to us this notion seems almost too absurd to need refutation. Regeneration is an inward, spiritual change, but baptism is an outward material application. Thousands have been baptized who were not regenerated; while other thousands have

been regenerated, but not baptized. Baptism with water is one thing; the baptism of the Spirit quite another thing. Baptism is a sign, an emblem of regeneration; but to call it regeneration is strangely to confound the sign and the thing signified.

It has been said that, although baptism itself is not regeneration, yet a spiritual influence invariably accompanies baptism, when canonically administered, by which the subject is regenerated. But what evidence have we of this accompanying spiritual influence? Is it anywhere promised? Is the fact of its existence anywhere asserted in the Scriptures? Or do the fruits of it invariably appear? Do those who have been canonically baptized exhibit evidence, uniformly, in their lives and conversation, that they have been born again? On the contrary, do they not in thousands and thousands of instances exhibit the most painful, conclusive evidence that they are not regenerated persons? Simon, the sorcerer, received a valid apostolical baptism; but surely we are not to regard him as a regenerated man. Besides; regeneration, *the renewal of the heart*, stands connected with salvation. Are we then to regard baptism, either on its own account, or because of any influence which is supposed to accompany it, as invariably connected with salvation? Do all those who receive a canonical, valid baptism become, on that account, the heirs of heaven?

But it is needless to waste words on so plain a subject. The dogma of baptismal regeneration, however explained, is no better than an idle, unfounded superstition. It came into the church in an age of comparative darkness, and ought, long ago, to have been expurgated out of it. It is not only without support in reason or the Word of God, but is of pernicious practical influence, leading those who embrace it to trust in an outward rite, when they ought to be cherishing an inward grace.

Some have supposed that regeneration is a mere change of religious *profession*, as from Paganism or Judaism to Christianity. But a change of profession is not an inward, spiritual change. It does not imply necessarily a change of heart. The *possession* of holiness, and the *profession* of it, are different things. Simon, the sorcerer, changed his religious profession, but he was not a

subject of renewing grace; and the same may be said of a great many others.

Some have thought that regeneration consists in a gradual reformation of conduct. When the profane person has left off his swearing, and the inebriate has forsaken his cups, and the knave has established a reputation for honor and honesty, each of these characters may be said to be regenerated. But here again we have an outward, in place of an inward, change. We have also a gradual, in place of an instantaneous, work. Every person is represented in Scripture as either a saint or a sinner, an heir of glory or perdition. We never read of persons partly regenerated, and partly not; the heirs neither of heaven nor hell, but in part of both. And yet there would be such a class, if regeneration were a gradual process and work.

Some regard regeneration as a change in the very *constitution* and *faculties* of the soul. But do we need any such change as this? Do we need any new or different faculties, in order to our preparation for heaven? Our faculties would be well enough, if we would use them well. We have all the faculties requisite to a complete moral agency, and we need no more.

Besides, it does not appear that in regeneration persons receive any new or additional faculties. They have the same faculties, bodily and mental, subsequent to this change, that they had before. They use their faculties now to better purpose. Instead of prostituting them to the service of sin and Satan, they employ them in the service and for the glory of God.

It may aid us in our further inquiries on this important subject, to consider, first, what takes place in the mind *previous* and *preparatory* to regeneration; and, secondly, in what the change itself consists.

We will suppose an individual in a state, not only of sin, but of *stupidity* and *religious indifference*, like that in which the world are generally involved. The incipient work of the divine Spirit upon the mind of this man, preparatory to his regeneration, is, probably, in the understanding. Light is poured into his mind, and he is led to think, to reflect, upon a new class of subjects. His thoughts are drawn out of their wonted channels, and fixed upon the great, but hitherto neglected, subject of

religion. He thinks of *God*, of his attributes, perfections, character, and government. He thinks of the holy *law* of God,—of its extent, its strictness, its purity, and its inviolable sanctions. He thinks of his own transgressions, and of the fearful doom which hangs impending over him. He thinks of death, of judgment, and eternal scenes. His understanding is opened to *see* these truths in such a light as he never did before. He has a vivid perception of them. They seem to him like realities, and seem very near.

Such is the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit in the *understanding* of the sinner. I say the preparatory work; for he is not yet converted, nor is it certain that he ever will be.

While this change is going on in the understanding, the sensibilities are more or less affected. The baser feelings of the soul —those under the influence of which the individual had acted in the days of his stupidity and worldliness—are, for the time, held in check, and other feelings are awakened. He is the subject now of shame, remorse, anxiety, and fear. He feels a sense of guilt and of condemnation. He is astonished at his past course of life, and wonders that God has borne with him as he has. He is "pricked to the heart" by the sword of the Spirit, and begins to inquire, with a solemn earnestness, "Men and brethren, what shall I do?"

Still, this individual is not converted, nor is it yet certain that he ever will be. His understanding is enlightened; his sensibilities are affected. An indispensable preparatory work has been done, but he has not yet put forth one holy affection, or drawn one breath of spiritual life. He has what are called the strivings of the Spirit; but he may grieve the Spirit from him, and relapse into a state of greater hardness than ever.

But if he does not grieve the Spirit to depart; if the process of illumination and impression goes on; the will, the affections, will soon be gained. The motives of the gospel will predominate over all opposing influences. Under some form of presentation, these motives will be YIELDED TO; and in the moment of yielding, THE HEART IS CHANGED.

It matters not in view of what truth the first holy affection is put forth, or what form this affection assumes. It may be love,

in view of the divine perfections and character; it may be gratitude under a sense of the divine goodness and mercy; it may be grief and godly sorrow, in view of personal sin and guilt; it may be a cordial submission to the divine government; it may be an affectionate trust and confidence in the Saviour;—but whatever name or form the affection may assume, if it is a holy affection, and THE FIRST holy affection, the change which it constitutes is regeneration. The subject of it is born again. He has commenced a new character, and is spiritually a new creature. He has entered into the covenant of grace, and by so doing has come into a new relation to God, to the Saviour, and to the universe. His first holy affection will not be the last. These new and holy exercises will be repeated and strengthened, and he will be led into the performance of all Christian duty. The grace which he has received will be in him as a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life.

Regeneration, I have described, as *a yielding of the heart to God;* a yielding of the affections, in some form, to the power and influence of the gospel. It follows from this account of the matter that, in regeneration, the subject of it is *active*. The sinner may have ever so much of light and impression; he may be a subject, to any degree, of the strivings of the Holy Spirit; until the *heart is yielded*, and the *will bows*, he is not regenerated. But in the moment of *yielding*—and from the nature of the case this must be a *cordial*, *voluntary* yielding—the great point is gained, and the peace of heaven is secured.

I do not say that the change in regeneration is a *purely* voluntary one; for some of those holy affections, which are first called into exercise, are not of a purely voluntary character. They are, in their nature, complex; partly sentient, and but partly voluntary. Such, for example, are complacent love, holy gratitude, repentance, and faith. Still, they are so far of a voluntary character as to render the change induced by them an active change. The voluntary element so mingles with them, and they are so much under the direction of the will, that in putting them forth in regeneration, the subject of them is responsible and active.

That this is a correct view of regeneration may be proved from several considerations.

1. Regeneration may be supposed to be, as to its nature, *the opposite of the fall.* And as the fall of man consisted in his yielding to the seductions of the tempter, and beginning *actively* to commit sin; so his regeneration consists in his yielding to the motives of the gospel, and beginning *actively* to love and serve God.

2. *Truth, motives, moral considerations* are represented in the Scriptures as the instrumental causes of regeneration. "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*" (1 Pet. i. 23). "I have begotten you, *through the gospel*" (1 Cor. iv. 15). But moral considerations are addressed, of course, to the active nature of man. Motives have no power or tendency to bring about a physical change, or one in which the subject is passive, but only one in which he is active.

3. God *exhorts* and *commands* sinners to make to themselves new hearts; or (which is the same) to become regenerated persons. "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit" (Ezek. xviii. 31). "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart; and be no more stiff-necked" (Deut. x. 16).

4. God not only commands sinners to make new hearts, but he *severely threatens them*, in case they do not comply. "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for *why will ye die*,"—importing that they must die, and die eternally, in case they do not turn (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskin of your hearts, *lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it*" (Jer. iv. 4).

5. Christ sends forth his ambassadors for this very purpose, that they may urge men to repent, and turn to God; or (which is the same) to become new creatures.

6. The apostles and first preachers of the gospel engaged in this work, without the least seeming embarrassment from their philosophy. They besought sinners, in Christ's stead, to become reconciled to God. They cried in the ears of guilty and lost men: "Come, come, for all things are now ready." And if

any did not come, they told them plainly that it was because they would not.

7. I may appeal finally, on this question, to the *conscious experience* of all truly regenerated persons. Christ has various methods of dealing with men, in preparing them for his spiritual kingdom; but they all enter the kingdom by the same narrow gate,—*conversion*. And of what are they sensible in conversion? What kind of change is it, so far as their consciousness extends? Have any new faculties been given them? Have they been physically wrought over into some other kind of creatures? Have they been sensible of any constraint upon the free and regular exercise of their natural powers? Nothing of all this. But they are conscious, in some way, of *giving their hearts to God;* of *yielding*, in some form, to the motives and influences of the gospel. They are conscious now of freely, spontaneously loving God, submitting to God, of turning away from sin, and of putting their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. They feel that they have experienced a great and glorious change; but it has been a change (so far as their consciousness can reach) in the free exercises of their own minds and hearts; a change of sinful affections for holy affections; a change from the love of sin, and self, and the world, to the love of God and the things of his kingdom. It is their consciousness of having experienced such a change as this, which leads them to hope that they have been regenerated,—that they have truly passed from death unto life.

The view of regeneration here exhibited is one of great practical importance, more especially to ministers. In the belief of it, the minister of Christ may go to his fellow-men on the subject of religion, as he would on any other important subject, and instruct and warn, and endeavor to persuade them, feeling that the point urged was one in which they were to be active, and in reference to which persuasion was pertinent and necessary. Thus, obviously, the apostles addressed their hearers: "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." They felt no more embarrassment in calling sinners to repentance, than in calling Christians to the performance of any spiritual duty.

But let the other view be taken. Let it be settled in a minister's mind that the sinner is *passive* in regeneration,—that a change is to be *wrought in him* in which he is to have no active concern, before he can perform any spiritual duty; and what can such a minister say to impenitent men, on the great subject of the soul's salvation? He may condole with them. He may pity them, and pray for them. He may direct them to pray with such hearts as they have, and wait for a change. But he cannot urge them to an immediate repentance, or to the direct performance of any spiritual duty. Or if he does address them in exhortations such as these, it will be with a secret misgiving, —a feeling that his exhortations are inconsistent with his belief. And exhortations uttered in such a state of mind will lack heart and earnestness, and will not be likely to do much good. In this view, I am constrained to regard the doctrine of passive regeneration as one calculated to strip the gospel minister of his armor, and to clog and embarrass him in his Master's work. At the same time, it is calculated to fill the mouths of sinners with excuses and objections, and furnish them with new refuges of lies, under cover of which they may sleep themselves into perdition.

Perhaps it will be said that the sinner is both passive and active in regeneration,—passive, so far as the influences of the Spirit are concerned; and active, in putting forth the first holy affection, in which the regeneration properly consists. If this statement only means, that the subject of regeneration is acted upon, while he freely acts; or that the Divine Spirit works in him to will and to do, while he actively wills and does; there is no objection to it. The sentiment intended is undoubtedly true.. But then this truth is applicable, not only to the first holy exercise in regeneration, but to all the holy exercises of Christians. These exercises are all of them fruits of the Spirit's operation; and it may be said as truly that Christians are both passive and active in all their religious experience, as that sinners are both passive and active in regeneration.

Some have made a distinction between regeneration and conversion; representing the former as the work of the Spirit, in which the subject is passive, and the latter as his own work, in

which he is active. But to this view of the case, there are several objections. In the first place, in passages already quoted, God commands sinners to make to themselves new hearts, or (which is the same) to become regenerated persons; implying that, in regeneration, they have something to do. We have seen, also, that sinners are "born again by the word of God." But the word of God can have no instrumentality in bringing about a mere passive transformation. Then the statement above given presents an inadequate view of conversion. Conversion is as much a fruit of the Spirit's operation as regeneration is; and to represent it as the mere work of the sinner is to pervert and degrade it.

Besides; on the ground of the distinction here set up, what are we to think of the state of the sinner between regeneration and conversion? He is regenerated; and yet he has never repented, never believed, never put forth one holy affection. He cannot be lost, because he is regenerated; nor can he be saved, because he is unconverted. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3).

I am constrained to think, therefore, notwithstanding the high authorities which may be quoted on the other side, that there is no real, valid distinction between regeneration and conversion. Both are the result of a divine operation; while both indicate a change in which the subject is active and free.

In thinking and speaking of regeneration, persons often impose upon themselves by the use of figurative terms. To give but a single example: Regeneration, it is said, is the commencement of *spiritual life;* and as there must be life before there can be active motion, so the sinner must be regenerated before he can perform any spiritual duty.

The fallacy here is in the figurative use of the term *life*. What is spiritual life but holiness? And what is holiness, but in connection with some holy exercise or affection? And can there be any holy exercise or affection which is not actively put forth? Can there be any regeneration, therefore,—regarding regeneration as the commencement of spiritual life,—but an active regeneration?

It is indispensable, to a right understanding of this subject, to keep constantly in mind the *nature* of holiness. Holiness is a property of moral exercises, affections, or actions, and of these only. When it is said, therefore, that regeneration is the commencement of spiritual life or holiness in the heart, this is but saying that it is the commencement of holy affections in that heart; and these, from the nature of them, must be actively put forth. They can come into the mind in no other way.

In dwelling thus particularly on the nature of regeneration, I have incidentally set forth its *causes*. It may be well, however, to treat somewhat more specifically this branch of the subject.

The causes of regeneration may be divided into three classes: the *instrumental*, the *efficient*, and the *active* or *voluntary*.

The instrumental cause of regeneration is *truth*, *motives*, the *means of grace*. The truth is presented; the gospel is preached; means are used; motives are urged; and in view of them, and under their influence, the will bows and the heart is changed. Accordingly, Christians are said, in passages before quoted, to have been "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by *the word of God;*" and to have been "begotten *through the gospel*" (1 Pet. i. 23; 1 Cor. iv. 15).

This fact, which is strongly supported by Scripture, goes to illustrate (as before remarked) the nature of regeneration. If regeneration were a *physical* change, in which the subject was altogether passive, it might be wrought in us without the intervention of motives. Indeed it *must* be, if wrought at all. Motives would have no place or use in accomplishing such a change as this. But as regeneration is a moral, spiritual change, in which the subject is free and active, it *must* be accomplished (if at all) through the instrumentality of motives. It can be accomplished in no other way. It is not irreverent, perhaps, to say, that not even the Divine Spirit can regenerate a soul, except through the intervention of moral means.

But motives are but the *instrumental* causes of regeneration. They have no efficiency in themselves. The efficiency is all of God. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God*" (John i. 13). God

governs the moral world by motives. This is a law of divine operation. And this law is not contravened or suspended in regeneration. The divine power is exerted, not to interrupt the regular exercise of the human faculties, or to suspend the influence of motives, but to *sustain both;* not to infringe upon the creature's freedom, but to make him, if possible, more free than ever. The current of his affections is changed, under the influence of motives, and by the mighty power of God, while the new and holy affections are freely put forth. The sinner is renewed, not against his will, or without the consent of his will; but he becomes *willing* in the day of *God's power.*

He is himself, therefore, the *active* cause or *agent* in the change which he has experienced. The first holy affection is *his;* he puts it forth; and he is really responsible for it,—as really so as for the last sinful one. He has begun to love, to repent, to believe, to submit, and obey; and he does all this *actively.* How can it be done in any other way? There has been no compulsion or constraint put upon his moral powers, and there is none. He is as free in his holy exercises as he ever was in his sinful ones. He *was* as free and as active in his *first* holy affection, as in any that followed it; and is himself the *agent*, or *active* cause in the change which has been wrought. The prime efficiency was of God; the instrumentality employed was the truth of God; but the activity, the responsible agency,—the loving, repenting, believing, submitting, obeying, are all his own. They can belong to no one else.

I have more to offer on the important subject before us, which mest be deferred to another Lecture.

LECTURE XLII.

REGENERATION.

In my last, I spoke of the necessity of regeneration, of its nature, and its causes. It is necessary, because of the entire sinfulness of the natural heart. In it "dwelleth no good thing." In its nature, regeneration is an active change in our moral exercises or affections, from those which are sinful to those which are holy. The instrumental cause of this change is truth, or motives; the efficient cause is the Holy Spirit; the active cause or agent is the regenerated person.

It may be inquired here, how the Spirit of God can be the efficient cause of regeneration, and yet the subject be active in it? If it is God's work, how can it be man's work? If the new heart is the gift of God, what has man to do but wait for it, and passively receive it when it is bestowed?

Whether we can satisfactorily explain this matter, or not, the facts in regard to it are plainly set before us in the Scriptures; and they correspond to the statements before made. Take the following passages as an example: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezek. xxxvi. 26). "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel!" (Ezek. xviii. 31.) In the former of these passages, God promises to give the new heart and the new spirit; implying that the bestowment of it is his own work. In the latter passage, sinners are required to make to themselves new hearts and new spirits; implying that this is their work,—a duty which they may well be required to perform.

Nor do these Scriptures stand alone. We find many others

of like import, in which the same apparent difficulty occurs. Thus, while we are exhorted in hundreds of passages to believe in Christ, or to exercise faith in him; faith is expressly represented as the gift of God (Eph. ii. 8). And so also of repentance. Christ is "exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins" (Acts v. 31). And yet God "now commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent" (Acts xvii. 30). The same is true, in fact, of all holy affections. They are all of them represented as fruits of the Spirit's operation. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v. 22). And yet there is not one of these Christian virtues which is not enjoined upon us, in other parts of the Bible, as a duty.

Nor does the difficulty, if it be one, end even here. What do Christians mean when they pray for an increase of holy affections in their own souls, and in the souls of their brethren, and for the awakening and conversion of sinners? Nearly all our prayers for spiritual blessings, whether for ourselves or others, are of this description; and in view of them, a caviller might say to the praying Christian: Do you not acknowledge it to be your *duty* to grow in grace, to become more holy, to increase in the exercise of holy affections? And is not this the duty of other Christians? And is it not the duty of sinners to turn to God, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance? Why, then, ask God to do that for you which it is your acknowledged duty to do for yourselves? And why pray to God to do that for others which it is their duty to perform?

I make these statements for the purpose of showing that the difficulty (if it be one) is of wide extent, running through the whole Bible, and touching upon our religious exercises and duties everywhere. But, really, there is no great difficulty in the case. The Spirit of God is the efficient *cause* of all holy affections,—not only of the first, which is put forth in regeneration, but of all the rest. And yet, when these affections are excited, awakened within us, they are our own. We are free in the exercise of them, and personally active in putting them forth. God has *his* appropriate work in this matter of con-

version and sanctification, and we have ours. God performs his own work, and we perform ours. We are not called upon efficiently to cause holy affections, either in our own hearts or the hearts of others. This belongs to the Divine Spirit, and is by him performed, if it is ever done. We *are* called upon actively to exercise holy affections, or to put them forth. This work belongs to us, and is performed by us, if it is ever done. God awakens within us the exercise of repentance; but he does not repent for us. It is we that repent. God produces faith in the heart of the believer; but it is the believer who exercises faith. God does not exercise it for him. God gives the new heart in regeneration, or (which is the same) excites holy affections, where only sinful ones had existed before. But God does not actively put forth these new affections. This is the work of the new creature. And so of all the Christian graces and virtues, from the first, which appears in regeneration, to the last, which shines forth in heavenly glory. Were God and man represented as performing, in regeneration and sanctification, precisely the same things, at the same time, and in the same way, there would be a difficulty,—an insuperable difficulty. But this, we have seen, is not the case. Their works, though relating to the same subject, are diverse and distinct, and are carried on harmoniously together. To suppose the contrary, would be to assume that a mind cannot be *acted upon* and yet *act;* that God cannot "work in us to will and to do," while we "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling."

It may be inquired, again, whether the agency of the Spirit in regeneration is *direct* or *indirect;* whether the only work of the Spirit is to present and urge the motives of the gospel, or whether, in connection with this, there is a direct operation or influence upon the mind of the regenerated person. We hold the latter opinion, and for the following reasons:—

1. It seems better to comport with the full, unfrittered meaning of the Bible on this subject. The Scriptures do, indeed, teach that God converts men *by the truth;* but not that he works in this way only. On the contrary, the language of Scripture seems clearly to indicate a more direct application of the divine power and grace. Accordingly, renewed souls are

spoken of as *God's workmanship, God's building.* They have been *new created* in Christ Jesus. And the power by which they have been new created is said to have *wrought effectually in them.* In the account which the sacred writer has given us of the conversion of Lydia, it is said that "the Lord *opened her heart*, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul" (Acts xvi. 14). She did not first attend, and get her heart open; but "the Lord *opened her heart that she attended;*" importing a *direct influence*, by which her mind was disposed to attend, and prepared to receive the truth.

2. We reject the supposition of a mere indirect influence, because it is *unreasonable, unphilosophical.* There is no efficiency in motives themselves, by whomsoever urged; and there is no *independent* efficiency in the human mind,—unless we will set up the self-originating power of the human will. Consequently, if we exclude the divine efficiency here, there is no other, and the heart will remain unchanged forever.

3. The supposition of a mere indirect influence is contradicted by *facts.* Facts are frequently occurring, under the faithful preaching of the gospel, which can be accounted for only on the supposition of an immediate divine influence. Here is a person who has attended the same meeting, and heard the same truths, from the lips of the same preacher, perhaps hundreds of times; and in every instance without any good effect. The most weighty considerations are urged upon him, but he continues indifferent and insensible. At length, however, his heart is touched, and the truth comes armed with unwonted power. It arrests attention, excites feeling, leads on to a new train of thoughts and exercises, and speedily becomes the power of God unto salvation. But why this sudden and surprising change? The truth dispensed is the same. It is no longer or shorter, no more or less potent or important, than it was before. The preacher, too, is the same, and outward circumstances all the same. Must we not necessarily conclude in a case like this (and they are very common), that there has been *a secret, invisible influence on the mind of the individual concerned?* His heart has been opened, like that of Lydia, that he *attended* unto the things which before he neglected. God has been preparing

his mind for the truth, as well as truth for his mind. By a direct influence he is led to hear and to feel; and he soon becomes willing in the day of God's power.

In view of the explanations before given, it may be asked, in what respects regeneration differs from sanctification? The putting forth of the first holy affection, it seems, constitutes regeneration. But as to its origin and exercise, how does this first holy affection differ from the second, or the third, or from any which follow? And, in this view, is regeneration anything more than the commencement of sanctification; and may not sanctification be regarded as a continuous regeneration? As to the psychological differences (if there be any) between regeneration and sanctification, I cannot pretend to speak. The subject scarcely admits of a philosophical investigation. But in several points of view, certainly, the two things are different. For regeneration there is, ordinarily, a preparatory work in the intellect and sensibilities, which is not called for in sanctification. Then regeneration involves a turning about, a turning back, of the perverted currents of the soul; the first implanting of holy exercises, where they had never been before. As the literal creation differs from the work of providence, so does the new creation differ from that which follows. Sanctification, like providence, preserves and continues what the new creation had begun. Also regeneration, unlike sanctification, brings the subject of it, at once, into the covenant of grace—into new relations to God, to Christ, to the Holy Spirit, and to the church of the first-born. Being born of God, the regenerated person is a child of God and an heir of heaven.

Those who press the inquiry now before us regard regeneration as the implanting, not of a holy exercise or affection, but of a holy nature, or principle, or something else, which lies back of all holy exercises, is the ground of them, and in the reception of which the subject has no active concern. But this supposition is open to insuperable objections; and, as we have seen, there is no necessity of resorting to it, in order to make out important differences,—all the differences which are of any moment, between regeneration and sanctification.

It may be inquired still farther, according to the views of

regeneration which have been given, in what respects the backslidden Christian differs from the impenitent sinner. He differs,—

1. In that he knows experimentally, what it is to be a Christian, and to have the views and exercises of a Christian; which the sinner does not know.

2. There is a certainty in the case of the backslidden Christian that he will be restored; but there is no certainty that the sinner will ever be converted.

3. It believed that the Christian, even in his backslidings, has an *internal experience*, of which the sinner is entirely ignorant. He still has some holy desires and endeavors. He feels the burden which is upon him, and often sighs and struggles for deliverance. The grand purpose of his soul, formed at or near the time of his conversion, to serve and glorify God, and live for the advancement of his kingdom, is not utterly renounced. It is wandered from, and for the time broken, but not *renounced*. He sins, but not like the impenitent sinner, with his whole heart. He cannot so sin, because he is born of God (1 John iii. 9). In short, the backslider, or *slider-backwards*, has his face upward. His face is the right way; and he will yet recover, and *run* the right way. But the impenitent soul has his face the wrong way; and is rushing headlong to perdition.

4. The Christian, even in his backslidings, is *not entirely deserted of the Holy Spirit*. As he has some holy desires, endeavors, and purposes, he must be supposed to have the Spirit, in some degree, to sustain these half-quenched upward aspirations, preserve them from utter extinction, and the subject of them from apostasy and ruin.

It will be seen, therefore, that there are important differences between the backslidden believer and the impenitent sinner, without supposing the former to have received, in regeneration, a dormant, inactive principle of holiness, which he had no concern in procuring, and which he can never lose.

As regeneration is a change in the affections from those which are sinful to those which are holy, the proper evidence of it is the conscious possession and exemplification of holy affections. Do we love the character of God, his law, and his government?

Do we submit to that government, and rejoice in it? Do we hate sin, sorrow for it after a godly sort, and seek and strive to be delivered from its fatal power? Do we love the character and work of Christ, and put all our trust in him, relying on him, and him alone for pardon and salvation? Is this our inward, conscious experience from day to day, and are our conversation and life in accordance with it? If we can soberly answer these questions in the affirmative, we need no supernatural impression or revelation to confirm our hopes. We have the best evidence in the world,—all the evidence which the nature of the case admits, that we are regenerated persons. But if our inward experience is not of this character; if we have not these holy, Christian affections abiding, reigning in our hearts; whatever else we may build our hopes upon, it is all in vain. No other kind or amount of evidence ought to satisfy us, for a moment, that we have been born of God.

LECTURE XLIII.

REPENTANCE.

Repentance is one of the cardinal conditions of the covenant of grace. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts iii. 19). "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 3).

There are two Greek verbs which, in our English version of the New Testament, are translated repent; μεταμέλομαι, and μετανόεω. The former properly signifies to be *anxious* about a thing, to regret it afterwards. The latter denotes a more thorough change of the mind in regard to it. The following are instances of the use of the first word. "Then Judas, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself," *i. e.*, regretted what he had done, "and brought again the thirty pieces of silver" (Matt. xxvii. 3). "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent," *i. e.* regret it, "though I did repent," *i. e.* regret it (2 Cor. vii. 8.) "The Lord sware, and will not repent," *i. e.*, regret it afterwards, "thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. vii. 21).

As I said, the other word, μετανόεω, denotes a more thorough change of mind, and frequently, though not uniformly, expresses what may be called a true, evangelical repentance. It is of such repentance that I propose to treat in this Lecture. My plan will be,—

I. To describe repentance. And,

II. To show why it is necessary, in order to forgiveness.

In describing repentance, I need not notice all the mistakes and errors which have been held respecting it. The Roman Catholic tells us that repentance is the same as doing penance, and that this is a proper translation of the original word. But

this every one at all acquainted with the Greek language knows to be false. Others tell us that repentance means reformation; and they translate the original word accordingly. But this is to confound repentance with its fruits, and render absurd not a few of the representations of Scripture. John the Baptist called on his hearers, not only to repent, but to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; in other words, to reform their outward lives; implying a distinction between repentance and reformation.

The word μετανόεω, which we translate repent, literally signifies a change of mind. Accordingly, repentance imports an internal, spiritual change, a change of character. Repentance may be said, in general terms, to consist in a turning away from sin. Under a sense of the intrinsic odiousness of sin, the penitent turns from it with loathing and abhorrence. But under this general view of the subject, various particulars are included. As,

1. *Conviction of sin.* Persons never repent of their sins till they are convinced of them, or come to a knowledge of them. And this is something more than a mere intellectual conviction. It is a conviction in conscience; a conviction attended with more or less of feeling, remorse, distress.

2. Repentance implies a holy hatred of sin, and godly sorrow on account of it. There are two kinds of sorrow for sin; the sorrow of the world, which worketh death, and godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto life. The sorrow of the world may be a sorrow on account of the event of sin; or a sorrow on account of some of its present or anticipated consequences; and not on account of its evil and hateful nature.

I know not that I ought to be sorry that such an event took place, in the providence of God, as the fall of our first parents, or as the crucifixion of Christ. Joseph did not wish his brethren to be grieved or angry with themselves that they had sold him into Egypt, considering their act as an event in the providence of God, which had been overruled for good. To be sorry and complain at the event of sin may be even sinful. It may be as sinful as to complain on account of any other event in providence. Godly sorrow for sin is something very different from this.

We often see persons grieving and sorrowing on account of the present or anticipated consequences of sin. Their sins have brought them into disgrace and trouble, or they fear that they will, in this life, or the future, or in both; and they are exceedingly sorrow that they have committed them. They weep and mourn, they blame and reproach themselves, that they have sinned. At the same time, they have no sense of the intrinsic evil of sin,—its unreasonableness, its ingratitude, its odiousness and baseness; and, could they be sure of a deliverance from its dreaded consequences, they would desire no more.

Now, a holy, godly sorrow for sin is very different from all this. Godly sorrow is comparatively regardless of consequences. It fixes upon sin itself, as being opposed to God,—to his character, his law, his government, his glory; as opposed to Christ, and to all the exhibitions of his love; as opposed to the strivings and influences of the Holy Spirit; as opposition to everything good, and as being itself the worst of all evils; and with this view of the subject, the heart of the penitent is filled, engrossed. This is what he detests and hates. To be delivered from the mere consequences of sin would bring no relief to a mind in this state. It seeks deliverance from sin itself; and nothing short of this would be accounted a salvation.

3. Repentance implies self-abasement, self-loathing, self-abhorrence, on account of sin. We may hate and detest the sinful conduct of others; we may have a holy sorrow on account of it. But we never repent of the sins of others. Accordingly, godly sorrow is spoken of by Paul as working repentance, rather than as constituting the whole of repentance (2 Cor. vii. 10). The penitent sinner hates sin with a holy hatred. He sorrows for it after a godly sort. And with these feelings, when he turns his eye inward on himself, he necessarily abases and abhors himself. He cannot bear a view of his own character. He exclaims with Job, "Behold, I am vile!" and, with Paul, "Oh, wretched man that I am!" Under a sense of his unworthiness and guilt, the penitent sinner abases himself before God, accepts the punishment of his iniquities, and is willing to become a beggar for mercy. I remark,—

4. Repentance implies a forsaking of sin, and a persevering

struggle to resist and overcome it. Without this, there can be no repentance; and yet it may be truly said, that where the feelings above described exist, there will be a consequent struggle against sin. While under the influence of these feelings, the sinner cannot allow himself in sin. He turns from whatever he regards as sinful with abhorrence. When temptation besets him, he strives against it; and if, at any time, he falls before it, he rises again, girds on his armor, and prays for strength, that he may renew the contest more successfully. Indeed, he is resolved never to cease from this conflict till he comes off a conqueror, and more than a conqueror, through Him that has loved him and given himself for him.

It follows from what has been said, that repentance, in the larger sense of the term, is a complex mental affection, and requires to be analyzed in order to be understood. First of all, there is conviction of sin, itself complex, partly intellectual and partly sentient. Then there is godly sorrow for sin, and self-abhorrence on account of it, both complex, chiefly sentient, but to some extent voluntary. And then there is the forsaking of sin, the turning away from it, which is almost, if not entirely, voluntary. These several parts are all necessarily involved in that μετανοια, that deep and thorough mental change which we call repentance; constituting it a very complex affection,—not purely voluntary, but sufficiently so to give it a holy, spiritual character, and make it the proper subject of divine command.

We learn, further, from what has been said, that the marks of distinction between true and false repentance are very obvious. The false penitent sorrows chiefly for the event of sin, or on account of its present or future consequences; while the true penitent sorrows for sin itself. The false penitent is chiefly distressed in view of open, public offences; while the true penitent is equally concerned for his secret sins,—those which are known only to himself and God. His prayer is that he may be cleansed from secret faults, as well as kept back from more presumptuous sins. The false penitent, if he can be said to forsake sin at all, only forsakes one course of sin for another, of perhaps a more decent character; while the true penitent hates all sin,

and endeavors to forsake it all. He seeks and strives for a complete deliverance.

In the Scriptures, repentance is represented as absolutely necessary in order to forgiveness. We must repent, or forgiveness is impossible. But why is repentance necessary?

Not because of any insufficiency in the atonement. There is no insufficiency in the atonement. And if there was, repentance could not remedy it; since repentance can do nothing towards making amends for past sins.

Nor is repentance necessary in order to forgiveness, on account of an inherent, inseparable connection between the one and the other. Some have said, that as soon as the sinner repents, he is of course forgiven; it cannot be otherwise; the two things, if not the same, are inseparably connected. But this view is obviously unscriptural and absurd. Forgiveness is an act of God's free grace,—following repentance, because God has been mercifully pleased to promise it, and not because of any inherent connection between the two. God is under no obligations, in point of justice, to forgive even the penitent sinner. He may punish him after repentance, and yet be just. The covenant, in which pardon is secured to the penitent, is altogether a covenant of grace. But,—

1. Repentance is necessary in order to pardon, since it is fitting and proper that God should, on the ground of the atonement, forgive penitent sinners, and them only. When sinners begin to be truly sorry for their sins, and to abase and abhor themselves on account of them; when they acknowledge the justice of God in their condemnation, and are willing to come down and beg for mercy,—a full expiation having being made in the blood of Christ,—God may consistently and properly bestow pardon upon them, if he pleases. But suppose, instead of repenting, that the sinner persists and justifies himself in wickedness; suppose the language of his heart to God is, "We will not have thee to reign over us; depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways";—can God now consistently forgive him? Would not a pardon bestowed under such circumstances be infinitely degrading to the Deity, and justly expose him to the scorn and contempt of the universe?

2. Repentance is necessary in order to forgiveness, since none but penitent sinners will accept the forgiveness which God offers. The language of impenitence is, "I am not criminal,—at least, not so criminal as God pretends. He would make me unspeakably guilty, and deserving of eternal punishment; but I do not feel that this is the case. I cannot acknowledge such guilt as this, and of couse I cannot accept a pardon for it." Such being the virtual language of the impenitent soul, it is easy to see why God cannot consistently bestow on him a pardon. He would not accept it on the terms of the gospel, even if the gift was made.

3. If God should pardon impenitent sinners, their pardon would do them no good. If the penalty of the law were remitted up to the present time, they would immediately sin, and incur it again. And if their sentence were remitted finally, and they taken to heaven, heaven would be no place of happiness to them. They would prefer to escape, and hide themselves in the bottomless pit, rather than dwell in the holy atmosphere of heaven, so near to the throne of God.

We see, then, that repentance, as a condition of pardon, is not an arbitrary one. It is required for the best and most obvious reasons. God could not save us in our sins, for this would be no salvation; and he only requires us to repent of them, and turn from them, in order to be saved. Surely, then, God has not hedged up the way of life with needless and arbitrary conditions. The terms of pardon proposed in the gospel are as low and as easy as they could possibly be made.

With a single collateral inquiry, I close. The question is often asked, Which is first in order, repentance or regeneration? Some religionists tell us that repentance is first; that the sinner is not unfrequently a penitent, several days before regeneration is accomplished. Others reverse this order, and insist that regeneration is first. The sinner must be regenerated before he can repent or perform any other spiritual duty.

Regeneration, we have said in a previous Lecture, is the commencement of holy exercises or affections in the sinner's heart. It is the waking up, the putting forth, of such affections for the

first time. Of course no holy affection, of any kind, can have existed in that heart before.

But true, evangelical repentance is a holy affection, and, consequently, cannot precede regeneration. Else, regeneration is not what we have defined it to be,—the commencement of holiness in the sinner's heart.

Shall we say, then, that regeneration precedes repentance? To this we answer, that it may, or may not. If repentance is the first holy affection which the Spirit of God wakes up in the sinner's heart; if holiness in the heart begins with this (as sometimes it does), then regeneration and repentance are identical. They are the same thing. Spiritual life commences, in this case, in an exercise of true repentance.

But if some other holy affection is first put forth, as love, submission, gratitude, faith,—and repentance comes in subsequent to these exercises, or to either of them,—then repentance follows regeneration. There is holiness in the heart, and the regeneration takes place before that particular form of holiness which we call repentance is exercised. There is, we think, no invariable order of gracious affections in the renewed heart. The particular form of holy affection which first appears will be according to the particular object or motive which is at the time presented. But the first holy affection, whatever the form, constitutes regeneration, and brings the subject of it into the covenant of grace.

LECTURE XLIV.

FAITH IN CHRIST.

Faith in Christ, like repentance, is an indispensable condition of the covenant of grace. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16).

My object in this Lecture will be,—

I. To describe true faith in Christ. And,

II. To show why it is necessary in order to salvation.

True faith in Christ includes all those exercises and affections of which the believer is the subject in respect to Christ. If we can ascertain what these are, we may determine what exercises are included under the general idea of faith.

First, then, the Christian believes, intellectually, all that the Scriptures teach respecting Christ. He believes that Christ was both divine and human, God and man; that he came into the world in the manner, and on the errand, ascribed to him in the Scriptures; that he here did, and said, and suffered, all that is related of him; that by suffering and dying in the sinner's stead he made a full atonement for sin; that he rose from the dead, and ascended into the heavens, where he is Head over all things to his church, and ever liveth to make intercession for his people; and that he will come again to judge the world at the last day. All these great truths, together with the other connected facts in relation to Christ, the Christian believes. He holds them, and rests upon them, as unquestionably true.

But this full intellectual assent to the entire doctrine of Christ is not alone sufficient to constitute saving faith. There is such a thing as "holding the truth in unrighteousness." I remark, therefore, secondly, that the true Christian believes, not only

with his understanding, but his heart. He not only believes in Christ, but he loves him. He loves all that he knows concerning him. He loves his holy and benevolent character. He loves his winning, searching truths. He cordially approves of all his offices and works. Indeed, the whole doctrine of Christ —all that the Christian believes respecting him—he admires and loves.

Nor is this all. I remark, thirdly, the Christian commits his lost soul to Christ, and trusts in him alone for salvation. He sees himself to be an unworthy, guilty sinner. He sees himself to be a lost sinner, holden for a debt which he can never pay, and exposed to an awful, eternal punishment, from which he has no means of escape. He sees that the provided Saviour is entirely worthy of his confidence; is altogether such a Saviour as he needs; and with the full consent of his heart he commits his lost soul to his hands. Seeing no other way of salvation, and desiring no other, he trusts all his interests to Christ. He most cordially and affectionately embraces Christ, and builds upon him all his hopes.

This act of committing the soul to Christ may be regarded as strictly the act of faith. It is the act which brings the soul into the embrace of Christ, and makes it one with him for time and eternity.

Fourth: the Christian, having committed his soul to Christ, and become one with him, will now endeavor to obey and follow him. He desires to be like him. He knows that he is indebted to Christ for all that he has, and he most heartily consecrates all to his glory. He cordially receives Christ, in all his revealed offices and works, as prophet, priest, and king; and while he loves his instructions, and confides in his blood, he wishes to copy his example, and to obey his laws. He feels constrained to live no longer unto himself, but to him who died for him, and rose again.

Such, then, in few words, is true faith in Christ,—a firm belief in all that the Scriptures teach concerning him; a love of his character and work; an unreserved reliance on him for salvation, and a fixed resolution to live to his glory. Or, to simplify the matter still more, true faith in Christ is to believe in

him, and to conform the character to such belief. It is to believe in him, and to feel, live, and act, as though we did believe; or, which is the same, to show our faith by our works.

If this be true, then we see how true faith in Christ differs from every form of false faith. We have said that true faith in Christ receives the whole doctrine of Christ,—all that the Scriptures reveal concerning him. Now, there is a form of false faith which fails to do this. It rejects large masses of essential truth. It holds error, in the place of truth. It fritters down the religion of Christ, till it becomes little more than the religion of nature.

We have said that the true believer not only receives the truth intellectually, but he loves it. He embraces it in his heart. But there is a second form of false faith which fails to do this. It may be sound intellectually, but it is merely intellectual. The heart does not go with it. It is a cold, formal, speculative orthodoxy; a "holding of the truth is unrighteousness."

We have said that the true believer commits his lost soul to Christ, and trusts in him alone for salvation. Now, there is a form of false faith the opposite of this. It may be sound and orthodox; it may be accompanied by a zealous observance of forms, or by a virtuous life. But these forms, these good works, are trusted to, as the foundation of hope. The atonement of Christ is ignored, or set aside, and personal merits, acquired in one way or another, are resorted to as the ground of salvation.

We have said that the real Christian not only trusts in Christ, but he endeavors to obey him, to follow him, to be like him. In opposition to this, we have yet another form of false faith. It is a loose, Antinomian faith. It is like that described by the Apostle James—inoperative, worthless, dead, being alone.

Another form of false faith, which ought to be noticed, is a selfish faith, which issues in a selfish, spurious religion. There are persons who believe that Christ loved them, and died for them; and they make their supposed personal interest in Christ the ground of all their regard for him. They love him, not because he is intrinsically lovely, but because they think that he loves them, and will certainly save them. It needs no words

to show that such a faith and such a religion are very likely to be selfish.

In showing the necessity of faith in order to salvation, I shall pursue the same course of remark as in my last Lecture. Faith is not necessary to salvation, because of any deficiency in the atonement, or because there is any merit in faith, or because salvation is inherently, inseparably connected with it. There is no such inherent connection between the two. To the true believer salvation is, indeed, certain; but certain, because God has graciously promised it, and not because it is the necessary result of faith. Salvation, to the believer, is the free gift of God. But faith is necessary to salvation,—

1. Because unbelief is *sin*. Hence, to save a person in unbelief would be to save him *in his sins;* which is absurd and impossible.

2. Faith is made a condition of salvation because, to save a person without it (even if it were possible) would be altogether *unsuitable* and *wrong*. How can a person be saved by Christ who rejects Christ; who feels in no need of him, and no affection for him, and will not come to him, or trust in him, for salvation?

3. Faith is made a condition of salvation, because by this act, as we have seen, the soul is *united* to Christ, and, in affection, object and interest, becomes *one with him*. It is in the act of faith that the soul embraces Christ, and, as an immediate consequence, is embraced by him in covenant faithfulness and love. It is by faith that this union between Christ and the believer is formed. It can be formed in no other way.

We see, therefore, that there are the best reasons why faith has been made one of the conditions of the covenant of grace. This, as was observed in regard to repentance, is no arbitrary condition. It is not one which God has imposed needlessly, and with a view to embarrass us in the way to heaven, but one most reasonable and indispensable. We *must* believe, in order to be saved, because, in the very nature of things, there can be no salvation for us in any other way.

And this is an impression which ministers, in preaching, should be careful to make. Impenitent sinners are very liable

to misapprehension here. They might hope to be saved, they think, if these terms of salvation were only out of the way. But faith and repentance lie directly across their path, and how to remove them, or get over them, they cannot tell. Now, such persons should be made to see and understand, that these terms of salvation are not needless impositions. So far from this, they are of indispensable necessity. And they are as low and as easy as they can possibly be made. God could not save men *in* their sins; and he only requires that they turn *from* them, in order to be saved. God could not save sinners *by* Christ, while they slighted and rejected him; and he only requires that they embrace him, and put their trust in him, in order to make their salvation sure. Certainly, if men will not be saved on terms such as these, they cannot, *should not*, be saved at all.

It will be seen, from what has been said, that faith in Christ, like repentance, is a complex mental affection, involving an exercise of the understanding, the sensibilities, and the will. The understanding consents to the whole doctrine of Christ, the feelings are interested in it, while the will fixes upon Christ, chooses him, embraces him, trusts in him, and makes him the portion of the soul.

But, notwithstanding the complex nature of faith, it may be so exhibited, so simplified, as to become a very plain subject. It has been so long shrouded in theological mystery, that many people are perplexed with it, and know not how to understand it. But when simply and properly stated, it is very plain. What plainer than to *believe* the truth of the gospel message, and to feel, live, and act as though we did believe? Yet this is faith. It is all the faith, and involves all the religion, that we need.

I may remark, in closing, that faith in God and faith in Christ are of the same general nature, differing only in respect to their objects. Faith in God implies that we believe God,—believe in his existence, believe his word, his truth, his promises, his threatenings, his revelations, all that he says, or that is said of him, in the Scriptures. It also implies that we feel, live, and act as though we did believe these things; or that we show our faith by our works. Such is faith in God. Such was the faith of

Noah, of Abraham, of Moses, of Samuel, and of all those worthies, whose faith is celebrated in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Their faith did not fix directly upon Christ, but upon some promise or revelation of God. And yet, that it was genuine and saving is evident from the fact that it was imputed to them for righteousness, or, in other words, was the means of their justification. (See Rom. iv. 22.)

Faith in Christ, as described above, is to believe what the Scriptures tell us respecting Christ, and to feel and live as though we did believe it. And this, obviously, is the same, except in regard to its particular object, as faith in God. The faith of Abraham was of the same nature precisely as that of Paul, and the same that is required of Christians now. Abraham believed the revelations which were made to him, and acted accordingly. And if we believe the revelations which God has made to us of his Son, and live conformably to them, we shall soon be with Abraham and Paul in the same heaven, and shall unite with them in singing the same song of redeeming mercy forever.

LECTURE XLV.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

JUSTIFICATION is a forensic term, borrowed from the usages of courts. A person is charged with some offence or crime, is arraigned for it, and put upon trial. But in the progress of the trial, it appears that he is not guilty. Of course, he is acquitted, or, which is the same, justified. This is legal justification.

There are two ways in which a person may be legally justified. In the first place, there may be no evidence that he has committed the crime charged upon him. Or, secondly, it may be made to appear that though he did perform the act, he did it under circumstances which amount to a justification. Thus a person accused of manslaughter may be able to show that he committed the act unintentionally, or in self-defence.

But in neither of these ways, nor in any other, can sinners be legally justified before God. The fact charged upon them is sin,—transgression of the divine law; and it is absolutely certain that the charge is true. God knows it is true, and they know it is true.

Nor can they ever make it appear that they sinned under circumstances which amount to a justification, or which furnish them with a good excuse. If they could charge their sin upon Adam, this might be a sufficient excuse. Or if they could charge it upon their very nature,—the constitution of soul with which they were born,—this might be a sufficient excuse. Or if they could charge it upon the purposes or the providence of God, this might be a sufficient excuse. Or if they could plead that they had sinned from a strict natural necessity, or because they had no ability of any kind to do otherwise, this might be a sufficient excuse. But neither of these self-justifying pleas

has any foundation in truth. Neither of them can be sustained a moment at the bar of conscience, or of God. Every sinner knows that his sins are his own. They have been committed by himself. They have been committed, not of necessity, but of inclination, when he had the power, and lacked only the will, to do differently. In short, no good excuse whatever can be made for sin; for the moment that an action admits of a good excuse, it ceases to be sin, and the commission of it confers no guilt. It is certain, therefore, that in no way can sinners be legally justified before God.

But though God cannot justify sinners legally, he may do it evangelically. His law being honored, his justice satisfied, and all the ends of government secured, in the atonement of Christ; although sinners are guilty, God may, if he pleases, and on such terms as he pleases, consent to treat them as though they were not. Though they have incurred the penalty of the law, and deserve to die, God may, in sovereign mercy, remit the penalty, and treat them as though they had not sinned. In this sense, God may justify sinners, and this is what is termed evangelical justification. It is God's consenting, on the ground of the atonement, and on condition of faith in Christ, to treat the sinner as though he had not sinned.

Justification includes the forgiveness of sins; and it has been made a question whether, in addition to this, it implies a restoration of the justified soul to the forfeited favor and blessing of God. Undoubtedly, it does imply such restoration; but the question remains, whether forgiveness, in the full sense of the term, does not imply the same.

We discussed this question in our Lectures on the Atonement, and need not go largely into it here. Forgiveness is a remission of the penalty of the divine law. And now, what is the penalty of the law? Very much depends on the answer to this question. The penalty of the law, it was remaked in the Lectures referred to, is both privative and positive. It consists in the loss of heaven and in the pains of hell; in a forfeiture of the divine favor and blessing, and in the endurance of all those miseries which go to constitute eternal death. Such is the penalty of the divine law; and pardon, forgiveness, in the full

sense of the terms, is the remission of all this. It removes our liability to suffer the positive part of the penalty, which is eternal death. It removes also the privative part, and restores our lost title to the divine favor and blessedness. Such, in its effect, is full forgiveness; and such, precisely, is evangelical justification. Accordingly we find, that what is called forgiveness, in the Old Testament, is frequently called justification in the New. And the Apostle Paul, in repeated instances, speaks of forgiveness and justification as the same.[1]

I have said already, that the ground of our justification before God is not our own obedience, moral or ceremonial; not anything which we can do or suffer, or which can be done for us by any created being; but solely the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. v. 9). It follows, that those persons who reject the atonement will, of course, reject the doctrine of justification by faith. And not only so, the ideas which persons entertain of the atonement will necessarily modify, to some extent, their views of justification. For example, those persons, who hold that Christ's atonement consisted partly in his active obedience or holiness, will be likely to make justification to consist partly in the imputation of Christ's obedience.

We have shown in a previous Lecture, that although the active obedience of Christ was indispensably connected with the work of atonement, yet it really constituted no part of it. His atonement consisted entirely in his sufferings and death. Hence the atonement provides no active obedience to be imputed in justification. And if it were not so; if the obedience of Christ could be drawn in here to help out the matter of justification, there are serious objections to what has been called the imputation of it.

If it be meant by this phraseology that the obedience of Christ is literally put over to the believer in justification, so as to become his; I object, in the first place, that moral character is not transferable. It is strictly personal. The obedience, the

[1] See Acts xiii. 38; Rom. iii. 23 and iv. 6. These passages are quoted and remarked upon in my Lectures on the Atonement.

personal holiness of Christ, can never become the obedience of another. The thing is impossible.

But if Christ's obedience could be put over to the believer, so as to become his, I might object, secondly, that on this ground all believers must be equally holy, and perfectly holy,—as holy as the Saviour; since, by the supposition, each and all of them are put in possession of the Saviour's holiness.

But some will say that it is not the proper obedience of Christ which is put over to the believer in justification, but the legal merit, the desert of his obedience. To this we object,—

1. That the desert of moral character, like character itself, is strictly personal. It cannot be passed over from one to another. We may suffer in consequence of the sins of others, but not because the ill-desert of their sins is so made over to us as to become ours. We may receive blessings in consequence of the piety, the holiness of others, but never because we have come in possession of the legal merit or desert of their holiness. But,—

2. Suppose the legal merit of Christ's obedience could be so made over to believers as to become theirs; it would follow from this statement that the believer merits heaven, as really as Christ does. He goes there, not of grace, but on the ground of his imputed merits.

3. It would follow, also, on this ground, that the rewards of heaven ought to be equal to all. They are represented in the Scriptures as being unequal. The saints in heaven differ, in this respect, as one star differeth from another star in glory. Each is rewarded according to his works. But if the rewards of heaven are grounded entirely on the merits of Christ's obedience, so put over to the believer as to become his, then, as these merits are equal to all, it would seem that the rewards of all must be equal.

Such are some of the objections to the idea of justification by the imputed obedience of Christ, or the imputed merits of his obedience. It is a comfort to know that this idea has come to us, not from the Bible, but the schools. The Bible has nothing to say of the active obedience of Christ, in connection with justification. It refers, indeed, to the righteousnesss of Christ;

but righteousness and obedience are words of different import, both in the original Scriptures and in our own version. Christ is called by the prophets, "Jehovah our righteousness"; but never Jehovah our obedience. As the obedience of Christ constitutes no part of his atonement, but was only an essential preparation for it, so it furnishes no part of the ground of the sinner's justification. "Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. v. 9). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. i. 7).

As the atonement of Christ is the sole ground of the sinner's justification, so faith in him is the cardinal condition of it. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John iii. 36). "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 3). The reasons why faith is made the indispensable condition of salvation were briefly stated in my last Lecture, and need not be repeated here.

There is an apparent contradiction between the Apostles Paul and James, in regard to the conditions of justification; but it will appear, on examination, that this is merely apparent. Paul insists that sinners are "justified by faith, without the deeds of the law"; while James asserts that they "are justified by works, and not by faith only" (Rom. ii. 28; James ii. 24).

Paul is here reasoning against the Judaizing teachers, who substituted works, moral and ceremonial, in place of the blood of Christ, as a ground of justification. Hence, he was led to say that we are justified by faith, without works, *i. e.*, without their going to constitute any part of the ground of our justification. But James was reasoning against Antinomians, who insisted that where there was faith, good works were unnecessary. This led him to say that such a faith was dead and worthless, and could never be accepted as the condition of salvation. Against a faith such as this, Paul would have insisted as strenuously as James; while against works, in the sense that Paul abjured them, James would have insisted as strenuously as Paul. It is only necessary to understand the two apostles,—to consider the circumstances under which they wrote, and the different errors at which they aimed, in order to see that there is no real discrepancy between them.

It has been made a question, whether believers are justified absolutely, or conditionally, in the present life; whether, on believing, their salvation is made sure to them, without any further conditions on their part; or whether it is still suspended on conditions to be performed. On this question, we submit the following remarks:—

1. In the Scriptures, the full and final justification of believers is suspended on the condition of their perseverance. "If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered" (John xv. 6). "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Heb. x. 38). "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. x. 22). "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. ii. 10). Indeed, if there were no conditions to be fulfilled by the believer; if his justification were, in the strictest sense, absolute; if his salvation were made sure to him, independent of all conditions, at the moment of his conversion; he could hardly be said to be any longer on probation. His state of trial would terminate as soon as he became a believer. But,—

2. Although the full and final justification of the believer is suspended on the condition of his perseverance, there are promises which make it certain that he will persevere. These promises are very numerous, and will be given in the following Lecture. Hence, although these are conditions to be fulfilled, there is no uncertainty as to the issue. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16). "Whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. viii. 30).

It may be inquired, further, whether the believer is completely justified in the present life; or whether his full and complete justification is to be realized only in the heavenly state. The proper answer to this question depends on the manner in which it is to be understood. The believer is not delivered from all the bitter consequences of sin in the present life. These will continue to follow him, and press upon him, till he has passed through the gate of death, and entered heaven. Nor is he yet fully, completely restored to the divine favor and blessing. In these respects, therefore, it can hardly be said that he

is fully justified. It is certain that he is not fully delivered and restored.

But with reference to his liability to suffer the proper penalty of the law, to be banished heaven, and to perish forever; the believer does seem to be completely justified in the present life. He is no longer exposed to suffer this dreadful penalty. At least, he is saved from it on condition of perseverance; and he has promise upon promise to encourage and assure him that he shall persevere.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone has been a disputed one, at different periods of the church's history. It was earnestly contested in the days of Paul. The Judaizing teachers insisted upon circumcision and the works of the law, as a matter of necessity in order to salvation. "Ye *must* be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, or ye cannot be saved." But in this they interfered with the great doctrine of atonement, and poured contempt on the blood of Christ. It was this which roused the spirit of Paul, and led him to insist, in the strongest terms, on justification by faith alone.

This doctrine was again contested in the days of Luther. The Romanists had substituted the merits of saints, the intercession of the Virgin, their masses, indulgences, and superstitious rites, in place of the blood of Christ, as the foundation of the sinner's hope. But the strong hand of Luther swept all this rubbish away, and brought back the great doctrine of justification to the standard of Paul.

This doctrine is rejected now by all those religionists who deny the kindred doctrine of atonement by the blood of Christ, and are resting upon their own works, moral or ceremonial, as the foundation of their hope.

I hardly need say, that the doctrine of justification by faith is one of vital, essential importance. It contains within itself the very marrow of the gospel. It is, what Luther described it, *doctrina stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ.* "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;" and if men turn away from this, and refuse to build upon it as the foundation of their hopes, they may build where else they please; it is all sand.

LECTURE XLVI.

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

In discussing the doctrine of perseverance, I propose,—

I. To explain it.

II. To prove it. And,

III. To answer some of the more common objections which are urged against it.

This doctrine does not imply that believers have received anything in regeneration which they cannot lose, or that they are so kept that it is naturally impossible for them to fall away and perish. No person has any more religion than he has in exercise; and if Christians persevere in holiness, they must do it actively and freely.

Nor does the doctrine before us imply that believers, in this world, are kept free from sin. They may and they do fall into sin; but they rise again. They never so relapse as not to be restored, on repentance, to the divine favor and blessing.

The certainty that the believer will be restored does not, however, rest in himself. It does not lie in this, that he has something good within him which he cannot lose, or that his holy purposes are so strong that they cannot be broken, or that he has attained to such a degree of perfection that he cannot fall away. The certainty that the believer will so persevere as not finally to perish rests entirely on the revealed purpose and promise of God. If God has not made it certain, by promise, that his people shall not fall finally away, then they have no security, and no reasonable ground of hope.

In this case, however, as in every other of a like nature, the divine purpose and promise are entirely consistent with human freedom, and even go to secure it. While it is certain, from

the promise of God, that true believers shall be kept, and while they are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, they go on in their Christian course freely, voluntarily, and under the influence of appropriate motives.

It will be seen that, in this view, it is just as pertinent, and as necessary, to use motives with Christians to induce them to persevere, as though God had given them no promise on the subject. Indeed, the promises he has given were furnished chiefly for this end, that they might operate as motives, as encouragements, to his toiling, suffering people, to continue faithful unto death. For the same purpose the Scriptures employ various other motives, addressed to the consciences and hearts of Christians. They are exhorted and commanded to be steadfast in the faith, and are told plainly and repeatedly that if they do fall away, their righteousness shall not save them, but they shall perish in their sins. Such hypothetical representations prove the possibility of the Christian's falling finally away; they prove the danger of it, so far as his own strength is concerned; they prove that he has need of powerful motives to keep him steadfast to the end. But they come short of proving that any real Christian ever did so fall into sin, and persist in it, as finally to perish. The declaration of Paul to the Galatians, "Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed," is far from proving that an angel from heaven ever did this thing, or ever will.

The proof that, in the sense explained, true believers in Christ shall persevere to the end, is conclusive and abundant. This is proved,—

1. From the doctrine of election. True believers are represented as having been "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world." And chosen to what? Not that they should have some good impulses and impressions, and then fall away and perish; but they were "chosen unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 13). If, therefore, the purpose of God according to election shall stand, if the divine decree cannot be frustrated, it was

certain in eternity, when believers were elected, that they should persevere and finally be saved.

If it be said, in reply to this, that perhaps some are effectually called, or regenerated, who never were elected, I have only to answer, that Paul taught a different doctrine. With him, the effectually called and the predestinated are identical: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." We never read of his calling effectually any others. Paul describes all true believers (not a part of them) as having been "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4).

2. The perseverance of saints is secured in the eternal covenant of redemption. In this covenant all true believers were given to Christ, as the purchase of his blood, and the travail of his soul. But our Saviour says expressly: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

3. The perseverance of the saints is involved, not only in the covenant of redemption, but in the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace is that proposed in the gospel, into which the believer enters when he first commits his soul to Christ. The grand condition of this covenant is faith, and its great promise is salvation. "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." It is obvious, from the very terms of it, that such a covenant secures the final perseverance and salvation of all true believers.

4. The perseverance of the saints may be inferred from the fact of their regeneration. Not, as I have said, because they receive that in regeneration which it is naturally impossible for them to lose, but because it is God's invariable method, when he commences a great and good work, to carry it on to its completion. He began to create the world, and he finished it. He began to create human beings, and he did not leave them half formed, but finished what he had undertaken. Our Saviour undertook the painful work of making atonement for sin; and when he expired on the cross it was finished. So when God really commences the work of salvation in any soul (and he does commence it in regeneration), we may expect that he will complete it.

"The work that wisdom undertakes,
Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes."

5. The perseverance of saints is involved in the doctrine of assurance. Many of those holy men, whose names are recorded in the Scriptures, attained, in this life, to an assurance of salvation. This did Job. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand, at the latter day, upon the earth. And though after my skin worms shall destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God; whom I shall see for myself, and not another"[1] (Job xix. 25–27). The Psalmist had an assurance of his final salvation. "Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. lxxiii. 24). The Apostle Paul could say: "I know in whom I have believed, and am sure that he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day." "Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day" (2 Tim. i. 12; iv. 8). Paul further represents a state of assurance as attainable by all Christians, and exhorts his brethren to press onward and reach it. "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end" (Heb. vi. 11). This doctrine of assurance is obviously based on that of the saints' perseverance. On no other ground can the Christian—however high may be his state of religious exercise and enjoyment, or however long he may have continued in it—be sure that he shall endure to the end, and finally enter heaven.

6. The perseverance of saints is established by numerous and various representations of Scripture. The following are some of the declarations of Scripture to this effect: "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; and whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. vii. 30). "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from

[1] For more reasons than I have now space to offer, I accept our common version of this important passage.

the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38). "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John x. 27). "Who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation" (1 Pet. i. 5).

To the same effect are the following promises of Scripture: "Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6). "The water that I shall give him SHALL BE in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 14). "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John xi. 26).

Our Saviour informs us that "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance" (Luke xv. 7). But does not this presuppose the certainty that the repenting sinner will persevere and be saved? Would heavenly beings rejoice so much over the repentance of a sinner to-day, if they had no means of knowing that he would not relapse to-morrow, become worse than ever, and finally perish?

The Apostle John assures us, that all those pretenders to religion who finally apostatize and perish, never were true Christians. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John ii. 19). This passage not only asserts the perseverance of all true Christians, but furnishes an answer to all the objections to this doctrine drawn from cases of alleged apostasy. If the cases referred to are not cases of real apostasy, but only of backsliding, from which the subjects are recovered, then they furnish no objection to the doctrine before us. But if they are cases of real apostasy, in which the subjects die and perish, then they are in the class spoken of by John. "They went out from us,

but they were not of us." They never were truly converted persons.

Most of the objections, commonly urged against the perseverance of the saints, are entirely obviated by the foregoing explanations and remarks. As this doctrine is sometimes stated, and as it is commonly understood by those who reject it, there are very serious objections to it,—objections which cannot be satisfactorily removed; but not as stated and explained above.

It cannot be said that the doctrine is inconsistent with human freedom; for it carries, on the face of it, that the saints do and must persevere freely. They must be free agents, or the doctrine cannot be true.

Nor can it be said that the doctrine is inconsistent with the use of motives; for it necessarily implies that there must be motives. How shall saints persevere actively, voluntarily, but under the influence of appropriate motives?

Nor is the doctrine at all inconsistent with those Scriptures which represent believers as liable to fall away, and as in actual danger of so doing; for those who hold the doctrine truly insist that saints are liable to fall; that they are naturally able to fall; that, in themselves, they are in danger of falling; and that they have no security but in the gracious promise of God.

The doctrine, as here explained, is clearly not of an immoral tendency. How can the certainty that believers will actively persevere in a course of obedience and holiness have a tendency to make them unholy? How can the certainty that they shall be kept from allowed and habitual sin tend to plunge them into such sin? The self-deceiver and hypocrite may be left to abuse this doctrine to purposes of sin; but they would soon discover themselves, and be unmasked. A real Christian, one who has the heart of a Christian, can do no such thing. "How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Such an one will be melted under a sense of the divine goodness and grace, and will receive the promises of God as an encouragement to struggle on in the Christian conflict; to fight

the good fight of faith; and prepare for that rest which remains for the people of God.

The case of King Saul is sometimes urged against the doctrine of saints' perseverance. It is insisted that he must have been a pious man when he came to the kingdom, since it is said, expressly, that "God gave him another heart" (1 Sam. x. 9). But is it certain that this other heart was a renewed heart, a holy heart? We think not. The expression merely implies that, as Saul had now been anointed king, God inspired him with new courage, and with other kingly qualities, and thus fitted him, in some degree, for the exalted station to which he was destined.

There is a passage, in 2 Pet. ii. 22, which is sometimes adduced to show that Christians actually have fallen away. The apostle speaking of certain apostates from the truth, says: "It hath happened unto them according to the true proverb: The dog is turned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." But it may well be doubted, from the very comparisons used, whether these apostates were ever true Christians. Such Christians are never compared, by the sacred writers, to a healthy dog, or a washed sow. The language used rather indicates (what was undoubtedly true), that the persons referred to were never more than mere pretenders to religion, who went out from among the people of God, because they were not of them.

The doctrine we have considered is of high importance every way, but more especially as it constitutes one link in a chain of connected doctrines (usually called the doctrines of grace), which reaches from eternity to eternity, from the sovereign election of the believer, before the world began, to his final glorification in heaven. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; and whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here at the end of the golden chain, hangs the perseverance of the saints: "WHOM HE JUSTIFIED, THEM HE ALSO GLORIFIED."

LECTURE XLVII.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

I PROPOSE, in the following Lecture,—

I. To describe Christian perfection. And,

II. To inquire whether any of our fallen race ever have been, or are likely to be, perfect, in the present life.

Some pretenders to perfection speak of an imputed perfection. They are perfect, not in their own righteousness, but in the imputed righteousness of Christ. By an act of faith, they become so united to Christ, that all his righteousness is put over to them, and becomes theirs. Consequently, they are perfectly righteous,—as righteous as the Saviour.

It is objection enough to this theory of perfection, that it involves an absolute impossibility. This supposed transfer of moral character,—this putting over of Christ's righteousness to the believer, so as to become his, is what never was, and never can be done. Moral character—as I have had occasion repeatedly to observe in the course of these Lectures—is not transferable property. It belongs to its possessor, and to him alone, and can never become the character of any other being.

Some ground their claim to perfection on the fact that the moral law is no longer in force, especially in relation to the believer. The divine law, they say, has been annulled under the present dispensation, and, the milder and less rigorous requisitions of the gospel have taken its place. These milder requisitions the perfectionist, of which we now speak, professes to fulfil, and not the strict demands of law.

To this theory it is sufficient to reply, that the moral law has not been superseded or annulled, but is in full force now throughout the universe. The Saviour came to vindicate and

honor the law, but not to annul it. The dispensation of mercy is based upon it, but does not supersede or abate one iota of its claims. Men may frame for themselves some other standard of character, if they please, and try to live up to it, and call this course of life perfection; but the Bible knows nought of such perfection. It is of no value in the sight of God.

Some persons profess to obey the law, as at present enacted, but not the Adamic law. They think themselves perfect, but not in the sense that Adam was before the fall. But I see no ground for the distinction here insisted on. The divine law, as to the spirit and substance of it, is immutable. It has undergone no change, from the creation to the present hour. We are required to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves; and Adam, in his best estate, could do no more.

Some claim to be perfect, but not sinlessly perfect. They refrain from known acts of sin, but do not profess to be free from mistakes and errors, and consequent transgressions. They may be chargeable with sins, but they are not known sins; they are not conscious of them.

Supposing these persons to be as good as they think they are, I see no propriety in calling them perfect, except as this term may be applied to all sincere, upright, conscientious Christians. Such Christians do not allow themselves in sin. They do not commit wilful transgressions. They may pass hours and days, and not be conscious of breaking any divine command. Still, they do not regard themselves as perfect, nor can the term perfection, in its strict and proper sense, be applied to them. A perfection, not sinless, is properly no perfection. At least, it is not the perfection about which we now inquire.

To be perfect, in the proper sense of the term, is perfectly to obey the divine law. It is to love God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves; and to exemplify this love, in all appropriate outward action. It is to serve God to the full extent of our capacities and powers. It is to glorify him, perfectly, in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are his. In short, it is to be, in our measure, like God.

It is to bear his image perfectly. It is to be as truly sinless as the Supreme Being.

But have any of our fallen race ever attained, on earth, to such perfection as this? Or is it likely that they ever will? We certainly ought to be perfect. We have all the requisite natural ability to be perfect. God requires us to be perfect, and has made ample provision, in his word, for the attainment of that perfection which he enjoins; so that we are truly culpable, and without excuse, for all our moral imperfections. Still, the question of fact remains,—and it is entirely one of fact,—Is there any perfection in the present life,—such perfection, we mean, as that above described? Has there ever been, or is there likely te be, any such perfection here?

1. In proof of the affirmative of these questions, the testimony of individuals to their own perfection is sometimes adduced. But this is not satisfactory, because persons often judge of themselves too favorably. They think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. The young man in the gospel thought that he had kept all the commandments from his youth; whereas, in their proper spiritual import, he had kept none of them. There were some in the church at Laodicea who thought that they were "rich, and increased in goods, and in need of nothing;" but our Saviour told them that they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. iii. 17). In the year 1763 some hundreds, in the Methodist society in London, professed to be "perfected in love." But Mr. Wesley says that many among them "were manifestly wanting in the fruit." Some, he tells us, are "wanting in long-suffering and Christian resignation;" "some are wanting in gentleness;" some "in goodness;" some "in fidelity and godly sincerity;" some "in meekness and quietness of spirit;" some "in temperance."[1]

2. The testimony of individuals to the perfection of others is also adduced; but this, too, is of little weight. We cannot look into the hearts one of another. Partial friends may discover no blemishes in our characters, and may call us perfect,

[1] See Christian Perfection, pp. 111-114.

when God sees, and perhaps we ourselves may see, that we are chargeable with great imperfections.

3. But we are exhorted and commanded to be perfect,—a proof that perfection is at least attainable, if not actually attained. We admit that perfection is metaphysically attainable. We ought to be perfect. But are we so? God justly requires perfection of us. He can consistently require no less. But do we yield to these requirements? Do we become perfect beings? This is the question,—a plain, simple question of fact.

4. A like argument has been drawn from the means, the provisions of the gospel. These, it is said, and truly said, are ample and abundant,—sufficient to lead all those who avail themselves of them to the utmost of their ability, away from every sin. But who does avail himself of them to the utmost of his ability? Does any one? Here again, as before, we have a simple question of fact.

5. An appeal is confidently made, in proof of perfection, to the promises of Scripture. God has promised, it is said, to deliver his children, or at least some of them, from all their sins, and to make them perfect in the present life. But after a careful examination of all the promises that have been adduced, I am not satisfied that this is the case. I cannot go into an examination of these various promises here. They may all be classed, as their connection will show, under the four following heads: Those which relate to the state of the Jews, after their return from Babylon; or to the state of the church, in general, under the gospel dispensation; or to the state of the church and world during the millennium; or to the heavenly state.[1] The passages which fall into the two first of these classes cannot be regarded, by any one, as promising a sinless perfection. No one can think that the Jews were without sin, after their return from Babylon; or that the same is true of the church, in general, under the gospel dispensation. The fourth class of

[1] As specimens of the first class, see Deut. xxx. 1-6; Jer. l. 17-20; Ezek. xxxvi. 24-26 and xxxvii. 23. Of the second class, Jer. xxxi. 31-34; Heb. viii. 6-13. Of the third class, Is. xi. 6-9; Zech. xiv. 20; Rev. xx. 4. Of the fourth class, Matt. i. 21; Ps. cxxx. 8: 1 Thess. v. 24.

passages,—those which may be understood as relating to the heavenly state,—without doubt, promise a sinless perfection; but then that is not in the present world. The only promises, therefore, about which there can be any reasonable doubt, are those falling into the third class,—relating to the millennium. These are replete with the boldest imagery, and are expressed in the strong and glowing language of the prophets. They indicate that the coming day of the church's prosperity will be one of pre-eminent, but not (as it seems to me) of perfect holiness. There will be wickedness on the earth, but it will be overcome, put down, restrained. There will be wolves, and leopards, and lions, and bears, and asps, and cockatrices; but they will be comparatively harmless. They will have lost their power to waste and destroy the church. (See Is. xi. 6-9.) Men will be born in sin, in the millennium, as they now are; but they will be early and generally converted. They will possess great attainments in knowledge and holiness, so that the spirit of the martyrs may be said to be revived in the earth (Rev. xx. 4). But even the martyrs were not without their imperfections. In short, this world, during the millennium, will still be earth, and not heaven; a state of imperfection and trial, and not one of confirmed and unspotted holiness. On any other supposition, how are we to account for the great and terrible defection which is to take place at the close of the millennium, when the nations are to be gathered together, in opposition to the church, in number as the sand of the sea? (Rev. xx. 8.)

6. Not only the promises of Scripture, but its declarations, have been adduced, in proof of perfection in the present life. But a slight attention to these passages will show that they fail of establishing the point in question. Some of them merely prove that Christians should be perfect; not that they are so. (See 1 John ii. 1; 2 Cor. v. 15; Tit. ii. 11, 12.) Other Scriptures, if they prove anything, prove too much. They are spoken with reference to all true Christians, and as much prove that all are perfect, as that any are. (See Rom. viii. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 24; 1 John iv. 16, 17.) A single passage has been adduced, in which Paul is thought to speak of himself and certain of his brethren, as perfect. "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus

minded" (Phil. iii. 15). But that a sinless perfection is not here intended, is evident from the connection in which the passage stands. It directly follows a sentence, in which the apostle expressly disclaims such perfection. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after. . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Other declarations of Scripture have been quoted, whose application may not be limited to the present life. They may, and probably do, refer ultimately to the heavenly state, where the children of God will be entirely and forever free from sin. (See Tit. ii. 14; Eph. iv. 11-14, and v. 25-27.)

7. But it is said that we often hear inspired men praying for perfection in the present life,—for their own perfection and that of others. And do we not often hear them praying for other things,—praying in faith, and receiving answers,—when the precise things for which they prayed were not bestowed? Thus our Saviour prayed, with submission, for the removal of his cup of suffering; and Paul prayed for the removal of his thorn in the flesh. He also prayed for the salvation of all Israel; and for the entire sanctification of the Thessalonians. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (See Rom. x. 1; 1 Thess. v. 23.) Yet all Israel were not saved; nor were the Thessalonians immediately and entirely sanctified: for in his next epistle to them, Paul speaks of some "who walk disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies" (2 Thess. iii. 11). In short, it is no proof of perfection in the present life that Christians may properly desire such a state, and may humbly and submissively express their desires in prayer.

8. It is said, finally, that certain individuals have actually attained to a state of entire sanctification in the present world. Noah was "a just man, and perfect in his generations" (Gen. vi. 9). Job was "perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil" (Job i. 1). Peter was "filled with the Holy Ghost," on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 4). Barnabas "was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Acts xi.

24). But when we look at the subsequent character of these pious men, we see that the perfection ascribed to them was only comparative, not entire. Certainly they were not sinless. Long after Noah was called perfect, we find him drunken in his tent, and his nakedness exposed to the view of his children. Notwithstanding the perfection ascribed to Job, we hear him saying: "Behold, I am vile!" "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job xl. 4; xlii. 6). Years after the day of Pentecost, Peter dissembled to such a degree, through fear of the Jews, that Paul "withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;" and "Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation" (Gal. ii. 11-13). But it is insisted that Paul and John, if no others, were perfect men. Yet they both disclaim it, in the most explicit terms. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect. But I follow after," etc. (Phil. iii. 12). "If," says John, "we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8).

I have thus noticed the principal arguments, in proof of perfection in the present life; and, to my own mind, they are insufficient. They leave the doctrine unsustained. And here I might, with propriety, leave the subject; for if the doctrine in question is not proved, it has no valid claim upon the faith of Christians.

But such is the interest and importance of the subject, that I cannot consent to leave it here. I proceed therefore to show, by a variety of considerations, that there is no proper, sinless perfection in the present world. And,—

1. I urge against the doctrine in question the almost unanimous opinion of the church, from the beginning to the present time. In the church of Israel, there seem to have been no pretenders to a sinless perfection. Their perpetual atonements and purifications all carried with them the idea that they were unclean; and the universal impression, during the first four thousand years of the church's history, seems to have been this: "There is no man living that sinneth not." "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"

Soon after the introduction of the new dispensation, and the great revival on the day of Pentecost, when, if ever, we might

expect entire freedom from sin, we find "murmuring," and imperfections among the disciples. We find repeated mention of errors and faults, even among the inspired apostles; and we hear them disclaiming, as before remarked, all pretence of having arrived to a sinless perfection.

In the ages succeeding the apostles, we discover no perfection, and no pretenders to it, except among the wildest fanatics. The sentiment of the ancient church was well expressed in the following adage of Jerome: "The only perfection of men is to know themselves imperfect."

The doctrine of perfection was taught by Pelagius and his followers, and has been held by individuals in the Church of Rome. Some of the saints, it is thought, have been even more than perfect,—leaving a surplus of merit for the benefit of others.

In short, it may be truly said, that the doctrine of perfection has scarcely had a respectable advocate, until the late Mr. John Wesley. And even he did not inculcate a sinless perfection. "The most perfect," says he, "have continual need of the merits of Christ, even for their actual transgressions; and may say for themselves, as well as for their brethren, Forgive us our trespasses."

2. The mode in which perfection is said, by its modern advocates, to be attained, seems to me unscriptural and absurd. It is attained, they tell us, instantaneously. The individual reaches it at a bound. Whereas the Scriptures represent sanctification as a progressive work. The Christian grows in grace: "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18).

Christian sanctification is moreover represented by its advocates as conditioned, like justification, upon faith. The two doctrines, sanctification and justification, are placed on much the same footing; and faith is made the condition of the one as much as of the other. But to this mode of sanctification there are insuperable objections. In the first place, there is no such likeness or analogy between sanctification and justification as is here supposed. So far from this, there are scarcely any two

points connected with our salvation which are more unlike. For example: justification is a sovereign act of God, forgiving and accepting the penitent, believing soul. But sanctification is a part of the official work of the Holy Spirit, purifying the soul from sin, and preparing it for heaven. In justification, God does that for us which we cannot do for ourselves, which we are not required to do, which we are forbidden to attempt. But in sanctification, we are led by the Spirit to the active doing of that, which is within the scope of our natural ability and of God's requirements, but which, owing to the depravity of our hearts, we never perform, without divine aid. Of justification, we are the passive recipients; while of sanctification, we are, under God, the willing agents,—God "working in us to will and to do," while we "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." As, in justification, we have ourselves nothing to do, so motives are never addressed to us with respect to this object; but sanctification, from first to last, is carried on through the instrumentality of motives, set home and made effectual by the Holy Spirit. Justification, so far as relates to the penalty of the divine law, is instantaneous and perfect; but sanctification is gradual and partial, commenced and going forward in this life, but not completed till we arrive at heaven. In the gospel, justification is, with the utmost propriety, conditioned upon faith. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." But nowhere in the gospel do we find sanctification thus conditioned upon faith. Faith, being a holy exercise, is a part of sanctification, and an important part; so that the more faith a person has, the more he is sanctified. Faith, also, by giving vividness and impression to the truths of revelation, and thus increasing their power over the mind, tends greatly to promote our sanctification. Still, faith is not a condition of sanctification, as it is of justification. The subject is never so represented in the Scriptures; and it would be a serious objection to them, if it were; as the idea involves a manifest absurdity. It is no more or less than this: "If you will put forth an act of perfect faith (for imperfect faith will not answer here) and so become perfect, you shall be perfect. And if you will continue in this happy state, putting

forth successively these perfect acts of faith, and thus keeping yourself perfect, you shall continue perfect." Suffice it to say, that such is not the scriptural mode of sanctification. It is not the way in which a person ever was sanctified, or ever can be. Believers are sanctified through the truth, and by the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit. The work is commenced in regeneration, it is carried forward here on earth, but is not completed till the soul arrives at heaven.

3. I urge further against the doctrine of perfection, that the Christian life on earth is represented as a state of warfare. Nor is this a mere outward conflict against the temptations of the world and the seductions of Satan. Nor is it a conflict against untoward propensities and habits merely,—things, which, in themselves, are not morally evil. The warfare of the Christian, in its interior, deeper elements, is a more serious matter than all this. It is primarily and essentially a contest against sin. The Apostle Paul has described it, in a single sentence: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these two are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. v. 17). What the apostle here means by the term flesh is very obvious. It is that which is carnal, and opposed to the Spirit; which prevents the Christian from fulfilling his holy, spiritual desires, and accomplishing the good that he would. In short, the term flesh here, as in most other places in the writings of Paul, includes the idea of sin; and the warfare of the Christian, in its most important features, is a struggle against remaining, indwelling sin. Of course, then, he is not free from sin. Nor is he likely to gain his last victory over it till his probation on earth is finished, and he enters heaven.

4. Another argument against perfection is drawn from those chastisements to which the Christian here is continually subject. The afflictions of God's people in the present world are to be regarded,—not as penal, exemplary judgments, such as sometimes overtake the wicked,—but rather as the corrections of a Father's rod, the kind and merciful visitations of his hand. But why does God correct his people? Why does he visit them, in this life, with so many chastisements? These inquiries

he has himself answered. "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes" (Ps. lxxxix. 30-32). If the children of God were perfectly good children,—if they never violated his laws, or incurred his displeasure,—why should they be chastised at all? Why should the rod be laid upon them, and they be caused to bleed and to smart under it? No kind earthly parent would treat perfectly good children after this manner,—inflicting the rod when they had committed no offence. God does not thus treat his perfectly good children in the other world. Nor would he chastise his children here, if they were not chargeable with remaining sin. And as their afflictions terminate only with their breath, we may well conclude that their sins and sorrows come to an end together.

5. The doctrine of perfection in this life is contradicted by many Scriptures. The Psalmist says: "I have seen an end of all perfection." Why? "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." Two remarkable and most instructive paragraphs to be brought together (Ps. cxix. 96). Solomon says: "There is no man that sinneth not" (1 Kings viii. 46). And as though this were not enough, he adds: "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not" (Ecc. vii. 20). He even interrogates further, and says: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"—implying strongly that no one can say this (Prov. xx. 9). The Apostle James, speaking of himself and his brethren says: "In many things, we offend all," or we all offend (James iii. 2). The Apostle John says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John i. 8). Our Saviour directs his disciples to pray daily, as long as they live, "Forgive us our trespasses;"—implying that so long as they live, they will have trespasses to be forgiven. It may be added,—

6. The more closely Christians walk with God on the earth, the more experience they have in religion, and the more deeply they become acquainted with their own hearts, the more sensible they are of their own unworthiness. It was when Job

was favored with the clearest manifestations of God, and his heart was filled with awe and love, that he said: "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job xlii. 6). It was when Isaiah was caught up, as it were, into heaven, and had the brightest visions of celestial glory, that he exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips" (Is. vi. 5). Augustine could not have written his Confessions, nor Bunyan his Holy War, nor could President Edwards have used the strong language in which he was wont to speak of his sinfulness the first week after his conversion, nor the first year. The deep knowledge which these holy men gained of their own corruptions was the result of much trial, experience, examination, and watchfulness. As they grew in grace from year to year, and made progress in the Christian life, they grew in humility and penitence, and in deep and affecting views of their own unworthiness. And so it is with every other growing Christian. His confidence in himself diminishes, in proportion as his spiritual attainments increase. As he learns more of the extent and purity of God's law, and sees more clearly the beauty and excellency of holiness, he feels more deeply the defilement and the guilt of sin. He finds new sources of evil opening in his heart, and points of duty before unobserved demand attention. And thus, while he is really improving in all goodness, he seems to himself often to be deteriorating. He finds himself at a vast and seemingly increasing distance from that mark of perfection at which he aims.

In view of all that has been here said, I must regard those claims to perfection which are sometimes made by Christians at this day—perhaps by young, inexperienced Christians—as a delusion. Nor do I think the delusion a harmless one. Its influence, in many ways, will be injurious.

In the first place, it will lead those who embrace it to lower down the claims of the divine law. The law will receive such modifications at their hands, that they can easily bring themselves up to what they conceive to be the measure of its requisitions. It will be so accommodated to the present infirmities and imperfections of men, that it will be no difficult matter for them to yield a constant and perfect obedience. But then, how

will such a modified law operate, in producing in the minds of Christians that deep sense of deficiency and unworthiness, and those feelings of humility and self-abasement, in which Christian piety so essentially consists? And what will it be worth, as an instrument of conviction to the impenitent sinner? How shall sinners of the more respectable class be made to see that they fall much short of the claims of such a law, or are in any great danger from its condemning power?

Another tendency of the delusion of which we speak is, to self-righteousness, censoriousness, and spiritual pride. Those who think themselves perfect will, of course, think themselves much better than others, and will look down upon their imperfect brethren with an eye of pity, it may be of censure or of scorn. This spiritual pride is, perhaps, the most insinuating and deceitful of all our sins. It glides insensibly into the heart, and, when once there, it is not easy of detection or expulsion. It is a sin against which all Christians have need to be watchful, and to which those Christians who think themselves perfect are peculiarly exposed.

A connection has been observed, often, between a fancied perfection and wild, fanatical, enthusiastic notions. So it was with the ancient perfectionists. They were all of them fanatics of the wildest stamp. And so it was among the early followers of Mr. Wesley. Soon after the doctrine of perfection began to spread in London, Mr. Wesley tells us that "enthusiasm broke in. Two or three began to take their own imaginations for impressions from God, and thence to suppose that they should never die. The same persons, with a few more, ran into other extravagances, fancying that they could not be tempted; that they should feel no more pain; and that they had the gift of prophecy and of discerning of spirits. At my return among them, some stood reproved, but others had got beyond instruction."[1]

Those who fall into the delusion of which we speak, are often led to undervalue Christian ordinances and religious means. The Sabbath, the house of God, sacraments, and set times of prayer, may be needful for those who are struggling under the

[1] Plain Account, &c., p. 76.

bonds of sin; but what necessity have the perfect for any of these things? Every day is to them a Sabbath, and every place a temple, and every breath as the incense of heaven. For persons in this state, ordinances are low and carnal things.

Still another hurtful influence of this delusion is, it will be likely to hinder the growth of Christians, and stay their progress in the divine life. Persons will not hunger and thirst after righteousness who think that they are already filled. They will not give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, when to them it is made sure already. They will be likely to rest satisfied with present attainments, and not make those efforts to advance in holiness to which, under other circumstances, they would feel themselves impelled.

I know it has been said that the views we have presented have a tendency to discourage effort, and prevent those advances in the divine life which it is the duty and the privilege of all Christians to make. "If we are never to be perfect in the present world, then we will strive no more after it. We will relax exertion, and rest satisfied with our imperfections." But this language is such as no true Christian will ever use. His heart will not permit him to use it. Besides, the objection is one which would not be allowed the least weight or influence in any similar case. Take, for example, perfection in knowledge. No one expects perfect knowledge in the present world. Learn as much as we may, we shall still remain far short, not only of absolute perfection, but that degree of perfection to which we aspire. But should this consideration be permitted to obstruct our progress in knowledge? Should this induce us to fold our hands, and remain satisfied with our present ignorance? No more should the certainty that we are not to reach the summit of moral perfection—perfection in holiness, in the present life—discourage our efforts to grow in grace. Both in knowledge and holiness we may yet have a long way before us. We may have heights to climb and difficulties to overcome, of which we, in our weakness, have never dreamed. But let us not, on this account, be discouraged or despond. We have a faithful Leader, and an all-prevalent Intercessor. We have a kind Father in heaven, who watches over us, and whose ear is ever opened to

our requests. Let us, then, "gird up the loins of our minds, and hope unto the end." Let us press onward in our Christian course, and never be discouraged till we lay down our bodies in the dust of death; and then the last sin will be overcome, the conflict will be ended, and our struggling souls will be set at liberty.

With a single word of explanation, we close. We are not opposed to the perfection of Christians. God forbid. The more nearly perfect they are, the better. But let them not fancy themselves perfect when they are not. This is the delusion of which we complain. Let no one "think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

LECTURE XLVIII.

THE MEANS OF GRACE.

The means of grace are the motives or means by which holy or gracious affections are awakened in the soul.

There is no inherent efficacy in means; and yet it is implied in the very term, means, that there is a tendency in them—a constituted tendency—towards the production of the end in view; else they would not be means at all. God has so constituted the human mind, on the one hand, and the means of grace on the other, that there is a strong tendency in the latter to excite and influence the former, and to influence it for good. Were it not so, there would be no reason or propriety in using means, either for our own benefit or that of others. Why make use of that for the production of an end which has no tendency to promote that end? Why should God require or expect us to do a thing so utterly unreasonable?

We are so constituted as to be strongly susceptible to motive influences, good and bad. In other words, we are constituted with various and powerful principles of action, to which motives good and bad may be addressed. Thus there are the appetites and natural affections. There are the understanding and conscience. There is the desire of knowledge and of happiness. There are the emotions of sympathy, of hope, and of fear. Thus constituted, the worst man in the world is susceptible to good motive influences; else there would be no propriety in using with him the motives of the gospel. And the best man in the world is susceptible to bad motive influences; else it would not be possible for a good man to be tempted, or, in fact, to have any proper probation.

I make these remarks for the purpose of showing that although

there is no inherent efficacy in the means of grace, yet they have a strong constituted tendency to move the mind and heart, and sanctify the soul. In putting these means into our hands, and directing us to use them, God has given us an admirably appointed and adapted instrument for accomplishing the end in view: He has given us, not an edgeless, pointless weapon, but a sharp two-edged sword, which is able, through God, to prick to the heart, and cut away the strongholds of pride and sin.

We may even go further, and say, not only that the means of grace are adapted to excite holy affections, but that holy affections are never excited, except through their influence. Love, for example, necessarily implies an object loved, and a motive or reason for its being loved. And so of every other holy affection. From the nature of the case, every such affection must have an object and a motive. We sometimes hear it said, that, though God ordinarily works by means in sanctifying men, he could, if he pleased, work without them. But I am far from being certain that this is true. I very much doubt whether, as we are constituted, God could work without means, in the matter of converting and sanctifying souls. How could there be love, repentance, or faith, in view of nothing, or with nothing presented to awaken, to draw forth, these gracious affections? The thing seems to me impossible.

The appointed means of grace, the means of exciting gracious affections in the soul, are the truth of God, and chiefly his revealed truth. "The sword of the Spirit"—the instrument with which the Divine Spirit operates in converting and sanctifying souls,—we are expressly told "is the word of God" (Eph. vi. 17). Christians are said to have been spiritually begotten "through the gospel;" and to have been "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, which is the word of God" (1 Cor. iv. 15; 1 Pet. i. 23). Our Saviour prayed for his disciples, that they might be "sanctified through the truth" (John xvii. 17). The truth of God, then, in its instructions, precepts, promises, and threatenings; in its addresses to the understandings and consciences of men; in its appeals to their hopes, and fears, and sympathies;—this constitutes the

ordinary means of grace, under the influence of which the soul is renewed, sanctified, and made meet for heaven.

Persons use the means of grace for their own benefit, by reading and studying the Word of God; by hearing it preached; by listening to the conversation, and witnessing the pious example of Christians; by meditation, self-examination, praise, and prayer. Persons use the means of grace for the benefit of others, by furnishing them with the Bible, and other religious books; by preaching to them the gospel; by conversing with them, and instructing them more privately in the things of religion; by praying with them and for them; and by setting before them a consistent Christian example.

In using means for the benefit of others, much depends on a wise adaptation of them. Christians may so adapt their religious conversation, that it shall be like "apples of gold in pictures of silver;" and they may so fail in this respect that their most serious efforts for the good of others shall be like "casting pearls before the swine." It is not enough for ministers to be theoretically acquainted with the truth; they must know how rightly to divide the word of truth. They must be faithful and wise stewards of the mysteries of God, who know how to give to every one his portion of meat in due season.

Much of the wisdom of winning souls consists in the skill and faithfulness with which a minister is able to adapt and apply the constituted means of grace. In order to do this with good effect, a minister needs to be well acquainted with human nature, and with the laws and operations of the human mind. He needs, also, to be intimately acquainted with the spiritual concerns of the people of his charge. He must know, as far as practicable, from week to week, in what state they are; else how can he so adapt his instructions and warnings as to meet the exigencies of their case?

It has been made a question, whether it is the duty of sinners to use means for their own conversion; or whether they are to be directed to use them? The proper answer to this question will depend entirely on the manner in which it is understood. If the question be, whether it is the duty of sinners to enter upon a course of means, with impenitent hearts, in the expecta-

tion that, after a time, if they persevere, their hearts will be changed; I should reply, at once, that this is not their duty. How can it be? According to the supposition, the sinner enters upon his course of means in a state of impenitence. But are not all acts done in impenitence sinful acts? And can it be the duty of a person, under any circumstances, to commit sin? Who does not see that the very terms involve a contradiction, an absurdity?

Besides, the supposition before us implies what is not true. It implies that the sinner has no power—in any sense of the word power—to love God and do his duty; and that the best he can do is to use means with such a heart as he has, and wait for God to give him a holy heart. Now all this is unscriptural, erroneous; and, not only so, it is a species of error which, wherever imbibed, cannot fail to have a disastrous influence. It will lead the sinner to defer present duty, and persist in sin, and charge his continued impenitence upon God, and hope (without reason) that God will one day change his heart, and prepare him for heaven.

But if the question under consideration be, whether it is the duty of sinners, in view of means and under their influence, immediately to give their hearts to God; the question, thus presented, should be answered in the affirmative. That there are means of grace is certain,—means calculated to awaken holy affections, and without which such affections never are awakened; and it is the manifest duty of sinners—as of every one else who is favored with the means of grace—to attend upon them. But, attend how? Not sinfully, but holily; not with wrong feelings, but with right. In other words, as soon as the sinner comes under the influence of appropriate means, it is his duty to yield to them. It is his duty to submit, repent, and become at once a new creature. This is the only way in which sinners can be said properly to use the means of grace. To attend upon such means, and pertinaciously resist them; to listen to the instructions and motives of the gospel, and refuse or neglect to submit to their influence,—this, surely, is not to use means, but to pervert and abuse them. And this is the way in which hundreds and thousands do abuse the means of grace,

under the miserable pretence of using them. Nothing is more evident than that sinners cannot be said properly to use the means of grace, except in yielding to them; except in immediately submitting and repenting under them. Anything short of this is not a use of appointed means, but a palpable abuse of them.

If it be asked, whether sinners who attend on the means of grace, though impenitently, are not more likely to be converted than those who neglect them, it may be admitted that they are, at least for a time, until they become hardened; and for the same reason that a man is more likely to be persuaded to do anything else, who listens to persuasive motives, than he who refuses or neglects to listen. Still, this does not prove that an individual may be excused in listening to the motives of the gospel,—motives which ought to subdue him at once,—for a year, or a day, or an hour, or a moment, and still remain unaffected. It is his duty to embrace Christ's gospel on the spot; and anything short of this is continued rebellion.

If it be inquired whether sinners may not be exhorted to attend on the means of grace, and perform the outward duties of religion; I answer, certainly. They are so exhorted in the Bible. But, attend how? Attend and resist, and wait to be subdued? or attend and yield at once? There is no room for a question on this subject. The sinner should be directed to pray, and to pray right; to read the Scriptures and to read right; to hear the gospel, and to hear right; to perform any and every appropriate religious duty, and to perform it right. He should be exhorted to attend on the means of grace, with the understanding that he is bound to yield to them at once; and that, if he does not yield, his attendance is, not a use of them, but rather an abuse. With this understanding, ministers need have no hesitation in urging sinners to attend upon any appropriate means, or to perform any external religious duties. And it is better, often, that sinners should be urged and exhorted in this way, than that they should be plied with the bald, unexplained exhortation to repent. The exhortation to repent not unfrequently seems unintelligible and intangible; while the direction to perform some outward religious duty with

penitent feelings, with unfeigned sorrow of heart for sin (which amounts to the same thing), is much better understood.

It is interesting to look into the Bible, and see with what variety and freedom the sacred writers give directions to the impenitent sinner. He must consider his ways; he must search the Scriptures; he must ponder the path of his feet; he must seek and knock and strive; he must turn from his evil ways; he must make to himself a new heart and a new spirit; he must repent and believe the gospel. "Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of God, and he shall lift you up" (James iv. 7–10). In one instance we find our Saviour directing an inquiring sinner to sell all that he had and give to the poor. With examples such as these before him, the minister of Christ need have no hesitation in directing the anxious inquirer to do anything which he thinks may tend to further his salvation; understanding always that whatever he does must be done in the exercise of right affections, and avoiding, of course, such forms of direction as can be followed only in the exercise of sin.

Some have been afraid to direct impenitent persons to pray, under the impression that the prayers of the wicked are sin. But so "the ploughing of the wicked is sin," and "the thought of foolishness is sin" (Prov. xxi. 4; xxiv. 9). But is this any reason why the wicked should not plough or think? No more is it a reason why they should not pray. The ploughing of the wicked is sin, because it is wicked ploughing, or ploughing wickedly; and the thought of the wicked is sin, because it is thinking wickedly. And so the prayers of the wicked are sin, because they are wicked prayers, offered up in selfishness, pride, and opposition to God. Let the wicked man plough (if he have occasion thus to employ himself), and plough right. Let him think, and think right. Let him pray also, with all prayer and supplication, and pray right,—with holy desires and for holy ends. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does,

let him do all to the glory of God; and then God will accept him, and bless him forever.

This subject of means and unregenerate doings was much controverted in New England less than a hundred years ago; the one party (holding to the natural inability of the sinner to turn to God and do his duty) insisting that he must be directed to do what he could do; to read, and pray, and use means, and even go to the Lord's table, with such a heart as he had, in hope that God would give him a better heart; while the other party (holding to the natural ability and immediate obligation of the sinner to repent) insisted that he should be directed to repent and believe the gospel; or if other duties were enjoined, it should be with the understanding that they should be performed with a holy, humble, penitent heart. This controversy has nearly subsided in later years; all evangelical ministers acquiescing in the opinion that the latter kind of direction is the more consistent and scriptural.

There would have been little difficulty with the subject at any time, had it not been unnecessarily mystified by a false philosophy. If regeneration is a physical change, in which an entirely passive subject is wrought over into some other kind of creature; and if there are means appointed tending in any way to further the needed change; why, the most the sinner can do is to use them, and wait the result. He may be under the necessity of sinning in the use of them, but then he must sin if he does not use them; and it may be advisable that he should sin in that way which will do him the least hurt and the most good. But if regeneration is a moral, spiritual change,—the free, spontaneous turning of the sinner unto God, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, and the motives of the gospel; then, obviously, it is the immediate duty of the sinner to turn; and for him to neglect this duty under pretence of doing something else first, and with a view to prepare him to turn to God, is only to affront God and cheat himself with a vain excuse. It is to persist in a needless and inexcusable impenitence.

LECTURE XLIX.

PRAYER.

"PRAYER," says the Assembly's Catechism, "is the offering of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and a thankful acknowledgment of his mercies."

A full, well-ordered prayer may be regarded as consisting of several parts,—as adoration, thanksgiving, confession, supplication, and intercession. These different parts of prayer should each and all of them be offered up with corresponding and appropriate feelings of heart. Thus, in adoration, which is the ascribing to God of the perfections which belong to his nature and character, there should be strong affection, devotion, confidence, reverence, and holy fear. In thanksgiving, there should be the pouring forth of holy gratitude. In confession, there should be deep penitence for sin. In supplication, there should be a sense of humble, childlike dependence upon God, and an earnest looking to him as the source of needed blessings. In intercession, there should be love to our fellow-men, as well as to God, and an earnest desire for their highest good.

In praying for blessings not expressly promised, we should come before God with the most profound submission to his will. We may humbly ask for such things as seem to us desirable; but where we have no promise or revealed purpose on which to rest our faith, we must be able to append to our petitions, what our blessed Saviour did to his, not our wills, but thine be done.

Prayer, to be accepted, must be offered in the name of Christ. This implies two things: A reliance upon Christ's atonement for the pardon of our sins, and on his intercession for the presentment and acceptance of our imperfect worship before the

throne of God. When the high-priest in Israel went into the most holy place to offer up incense before God, the whole multitude of the people stood praying without, at the time of incense, so that their prayers might ascend up perfumed by the incense of the priest. In like manner our great High-Priest perfumes with the incense of his intercession the supplications of his people, and thus renders them acceptable in the sight of God. And to offer up prayer in his name implies an affectionate reliance on him for this important purpose.

Prayer, to be accepted, must be offered up in faith; and the question arises, What is the prayer of faith? How much is implied in it? The importance of this inquiry demands that it be considered somewhat at length. I shall endeavor to show, first, what is not implied in the prayer of faith; and, secondly, what it does imply.

The prayer of faith, then, does not imply (what some have supposed) that we are to believe, in all cases, while praying, that the very things for which we pray will be bestowed. For,—

1. There is nothing, in every case, on which such faith can be reasonably founded. In some cases we have a revealed purpose of God, or a divine promise, on which to rest our faith, that the very things we pray for will be bestowed. But not so in every case. Very often we desire things, and with great propriety make them subjects of prayer, in respect to the bestowment of which we have no means of knowing what the divine pleasure is. And now, if, in praying for such things, we are to believe assuredly that they will be bestowed, the question arises, On what is such faith to rest? What is the evidence on which to ground it? A rational man cannot believe without evidence; and the evidence here is, by the very supposition, wanting.

2. If in all cases of prayer we are to believe assuredly that the very things we pray for will be bestowed, then we need never pray with submission. We need never pray as our Saviour did, "Lord, not my will, but thine, be done." Indeed, we cannot so pray, because we are to be assured that our wills will be done. Our desires will be gratified, and our prayers heard.

3. It is conclusive against that notion of the prayer of faith which we are now considering, that holy, inspired men have often prayed, and prayed in faith, for things which have not been bestowed. Our Saviour prayed for his followers, that they might be kept from evil while in the world, and that they all might be one, as he was one with the Father (John xvii. 15, 21). He prayed that, if it were possible, the cup of suffering might be taken from him. He prayed on the cross for the forgiveness of his murderers. Stephen, too, prayed for the forgiveness of his murderers. And yet it is not likely that the murderers of Christ and of Stephen were all of them forgiven.

Paul prayed for the salvation of all the Israelites. "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved" (Rom. x. 1). He prayed, also, for the perfection of Christians in the present life,—that "the God of peace would sanctify them wholly, and that their whole spirit and soul and body might be preserved blameless, unto the coming of the Lord Jesus" (1 Thess. v. 23). Epaphras prayed "fervently" for the Colossians, that they might "stand perfect and complete in all the will of Christ" (Col. iv. 12). Paul besought the Lord earnestly and repeatedly, and in such a way as to gain an answer, for the removal of his "thorn in the flesh;" but yet the thorn was not removed (2 Cor. xii. 8).

In all these cases it cannot be doubted that the individuals spoken of prayed in faith, and in a manner acceptable to God. And yet they did not pray believing assuredly, and on sufficient grounds, that the things prayed for would be bestowed, because they were not bestowed.

4. Our Saviour taught his disciples to pray for that which they had no reason to expect would be bestowed, certainly not in their day, if ever. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Thus prayed the disciples, at the direction of Christ, more than eighteen hundred years ago. And yet the will of God has never been done on this earth as it is in heaven; and it may well be doubted whether it ever will be. Neither have Christians who have offered up this prayer and presented it in faith, been afterwards kept from all temptation and delivered from all evil.

5. That notion of the prayer of faith which we are considering, if true, would be a most undesirable truth. Considering what men and women are here on earth, even in their best estate, it would not be safe, either for them or for the world, that they should always have their desires gratified and their prayers answered in the bestowment of their immediate requests. It would not be safe to entrust them with the power of obtaining, under all circumstances, just what they were pleased to ask. This would be committing to short-sighted, imperfect men a power which they are not competent, in the best manner, to exercise. It would be virtually taking the disposals of providence out of the hands of God, and placing them in the hands of weak and fallible men.

6. I object, once more, to this notion of the prayer of faith, that it involves manifest contradictions and impossibilities. For Christians, in their weakness, are not unfrequently heard praying one against another. They pray, and pray in faith, for opposite things. My good Baptist brother, in time of revival, prays earnestly and in faith that all the converts may go into the water, and join his church. My Congregational brother prays as earnestly that a full share of them may come to him. And how shall both, under such circumstances, be gratified? How can both receive, the very things for which they pray?

Perhaps it will be said that such cases can never happen, since the same Spirit which gives the requisite faith will show the subjects of it what they are, and are not, to ask of God. But this supposes a constant succession of new revelations from the Spirit, and, of course, that the age of revelation is not yet past, neither is the volume of revelation as yet complete,—a supposition which few sober people will be inclined to adopt.

Certain passages of Scripture are often quoted to sustain that notion of the prayer of faith which has been considered, but when properly interpreted they fail to do it. Some of the passages referred to merely hold out strong encouragement to prayer,[1] while others relate to the faith and the age of miracles, with which, of course, we have nothing to do.[2] I know of no

[1] As specimens of this class, see Matt. vii. 11, and xviii. 19; Luke xi. 13; John xv. 7, and xvi. 23; 1 John iii. 22.

[2] Consult Matt. xvii. 20, and xxi. 22; Mark xi. 24; John xvi. 13; James v. 15.

passage of Scripture which, soberly interpreted, will warrant the Christian in believing, in every case, when he prays for such things as seem to him desirable, that the very things for which he prays will be bestowed.

But if the prayer of faith is not that which we have considered, what is it? What is the faith which we ought to exercise when we stand praying before God, and without which our prayers cannot be accepted? I answer, we "must believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them who diligently seek him." We must believe that God is with us,—near to us,—nearer than any of the objects of sense around us; that he hears and considers all our supplications, and that our prayers have influence with him,—all the influence which they ought to have, or which we could, on the whole, desire. We are to believe that we have great encouragement to pray, and that when we pray in a proper spirit and manner God will, if it be possible,—if he can do it in consistency with his holy purposes and our highest good,—he will bestow what we request. And if, in any case, he cannot grant what we immediately request, we are to believe that he will give us something better,—something which, if we understood the case as fully as he does, we should the rather desire. We are to believe that, in every case, his will will be done if ours is not, and this is what we, on the whole, prefer. In short, the prayer of faith implies that we believe not only in the existence of God, but in the duty and the efficacy of prayer, and that prayer is the more efficacious in proportion to the humility, fervency, and general propriety with which it is offered up before God.

But this brings us to another inquiry; viz., What are we to understand by the efficacy of prayer? We are taught in the Scriptures that "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," and we have numerous examples on sacred record of the efficacy of prayer. Witness Abraham praying for Sodom, and Jacob wrestling and prevailing with God, and Moses interceding in repeated instances for his guilty people.

By the efficacy of prayer we understand its tendency or influence to procure blessings from God, which would not otherwise be bestowed. The ground of its efficacy seems to be this: It

furnishes reasons for the bestowment of blessings which otherwise would not exist. It is in this way that the entreaties of a child have influence with a tender parent. They furnish reasons which have weight in the mind of the parent, and which ought to have weight with him. It is often proper for the parent to bestow favors on being asked, which he could not have properly bestowed without being asked. It is often proper for a government to grant favors in answer to a respectful petition, which would not have been granted had no petition been presented. And so the prayers of God's people prevail with him. They furnish good and sufficient reasons for the bestowment of blessings which without prayer could never have been bestowed. Thus the intercessions of Moses furnished a reason why God should spare the children of Israel. And the prayer of Elijah furnished a reason, which otherwise would not have existed, why God should send rain upon a guilty people. And the prayers of Isaiah and Hezekiah furnished a reason why God should humble the pride of the King of Assyria and turn him back again to his own land.

With this explanation as to the efficacy of prayer, it is easy to answer the infidel objections which are commonly urged against the duty of prayer.

Prayer has been thought by some to be inconsistent with the moral perfections of God. "Will not God do right,—do what is fit and proper to be done, whether his people pray or not? Why then should they pray?" Undoubtedly God will do what is proper and right whether his people pray or not; but, then, it may be proper for him to do many things if they pray, which it would not be proper for him to do if they did not pray. Their prayers, in connection with other things, go to constitute the reasons on which the propriety of his dispensations is based. God would have done right if Elijah had not prayed for rain, but he might not have given rain; and it might not have been proper that he should. And so of every other case. If the prayers of Christians go to make up the reasons on which the propriety of the divine dispensations is founded, then the efficacy of their prayers is perfectly consistent with the unvarying rectitude of these dispensations.

Again, it has been thought that the duty of prayer is quite superseded,—is rendered unnecessary and even nugatory, by the omniscience of God. "Does not God know what things we have need of before we ask him? Is he not perfectly acquainted with our necessities and wants? Of what use or propriety, then, is prayer?" To this I answer, that it is no part of the object of prayer to inform God of what before he did not know. If this were its object, it would, indeed, be superseded by the divine omniscience. But God delights in the communion of his creatures. He is pleased to have them come before him, and affectionately and confidingly express to him their wants. The knowledge which a kind father may have of the necessities of his children does not render it improper that they should ask for needed favors, or make it improper for him to require them to ask. He may even withhold favors which he is sure that they need, simply because they refuse or neglect to ask for them. And if an earthly parent may with propriety do this, why not our heavenly Parent? He does indeed know what things we have need of before we ask him; still it may be proper that we should ask. Our asking may furnish a reason, which otherwise would not exist, why the blessings we stand in need of should be bestowed. Hence, if we refuse or neglect to ask, he may, notwithstanding his knowledge of our necessities,—he may properly withhold these blessings from us.

It has been further insisted that the unchangeableness of God is inconsistent with the efficacy of prayer. "'He is of one mind and none can turn him, and whatsoever his soul desireth, even that he doeth.' What, then, can your prayers do? And what ground for ascribing to them the least possible efficacy?" But what are we to understand by the unchangeableness of God? That he is unchangeable in such a sense as not to be influenced by good and sufficient reasons? Then he is unchangeably imperfect; for, if perfect, he must be influenced by such reasons. God is unchangeable in his nature. He is unchangeable in all his natural and moral perfections. He is unchangeably disposed to be influenced by just reasons, and to do in every instance what is right. If, then, the prayers of his people, in connec-

tion with other things, go to make up the reasons on which the propriety of his dispensations is founded, his unchangeableness is no objection to the efficacy of prayer, but rather implies it. If he is unchangeably perfect, he must be unchangeably a hearer of prayer. He must be unchangeably disposed to give to the prayers of his people all the weight and the influence which they deserve.

It has been further objected that the efficacy of prayer is inconsistent with the divine purposes. "If everything is immutably fixed in the purpose of God,—if he has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass,—then what room for the efficacy of prayer?" But has not God foreordained means as well as ends,—the reasons of events, as well as the events themselves? Did not God foreordain the prayer of Elijah, as well as the giving of rain in answer to his prayer? Did not God know, from all eternity, just how Elijah would pray, and just what weight and influence ought to be given to his prayer; and, in view of all this, did he not determine the answer? If this be so, then the purpose of God, so far from interfering with the efficacy of the prophet's prayer, went rather to settle and determine its efficacy. The prophet must pray, and his prayer must have its due influence with God, and the gift of rain must come in consequence. Each of these things was fixed and settled in the purpose of God, as much as either of them, and the prayer of the prophet had all the efficacy at the time, which it could have had, had there been no eternal purpose respecting it.

These several objections to prayer, though plausible in appearance, have really very little weight. They are the excuses of men who are averse to prayer, and who do not like to retain God in their knowledge. With those who love God and love to hold communion with him, they will have no influence; less than none. Such men rejoice in the privilege of prayer. Instead of searching for excuses to keep them from the throne of grace, they fly to it with an irresistible earnestness, and pour their requests into the ear of Heaven, assured that their prayer shall not be in vain.

It has been made a question whether it is proper to pray for things which God has revealed his purpose to bestow. But the

Scriptures have decided this question for us. We there hear inspired men, in repeated instances, offering up just such prayers as these. This did David, when he sat down before the Lord to commune with him of his great goodness. "Therefore, now, O Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house, be established, and do as thou hast said" (1 Chron. xvii. 23). This did Daniel, when he took encouragement from the revealed purposes of God to pray for the restoration of his people (Dan. ix. 2, 3). And so it is with Christians now. We know the purpose of God, that the earth shall one day be filled with his glory; we hope the fulfilment of this gracious purpose is near; and this consideration has aroused the Christian world to unwonted prayers and efforts to hasten the introduction of millennial glory.

A deeper question than the foregoing has sometimes been asked; viz., whether it is proper, under any circumstances, to pray for what we know God has not purposed to grant. In answer to this question, I may say that it is not right to pray for impossible things; or for prohibited things; or for things which cannot be bestowed without breaking in upon the regular course of providence. Miracles are out of the question with us at this day. Nor do I think there are many other cases in which it would be proper to pray for what we had every reason to suppose it was not the purpose of God to grant. And yet, I would not say that there can be no such cases. A thing is very desirable in itself, and (as far as we can see) desirable on the whole. It involves no impossibility, nor any interruption of the regular course of providence, nor is prayer for it prohibited, as in the case of those who have committed the sin unto death. It can be done, if God pleases; and it seems to us greatly desirable that it should be done. Now, what is there to hinder us from pouring out our desires, humbly, submissively, before God in prayer, even though we may have no reason to think that it has entered into the great plan of God to bestow the blessing for which we ask?

It may be said that such prayers can do no good. But this is not certain. They may benefit the suppliant. And they may benefit others. They may secure gracious answers, although

the precise thing prayed for is not bestowed. It may be further added that we have examples of such prayer in the Bible. When our Saviour prayed that the cup of suffering might pass from him, he must have known that it was the divine purpose that he should drink it. So, when he prayed for the forgiveness of his murderers on the cross, it is not likely that he regarded them all as in the number of God's elect.

It appears, from what has been said, that the grand object of prayer has been often mistaken. Some tell us that the object of praying for blessings is not to have influence with God in procuring them, but rather to prepare the mind of the suppliant for their reception in case they are bestowed. But, on this ground, why should we pray for blessings to be bestowed upon others? And why pray, as we often do, for blessings in the distant future, which are expected to descend upon coming generations?

Again, we are told that the leading object of prayer is, by a reflex influence, to be a means of grace to the suppliant, to promote his humility, his sense of dependence, his faith and love. And without doubt this is to be numbered among the benefits of prayer. But that it is not its leading object is evident from the nature of the service, and from all that is said of it in the Bible. Who believes that the great object of Elijah in praying for rain was, not to procure rain, but to promote his own personal piety and growth in grace?

The prime object of prayer is very obvious and very simple, —so simple that a mere child can understand it. It is, like Jacob, to have power with God. It is to move, to influence the Divine Being to bestow needed blessings; and we have the satisfaction of knowing, if we pray aright, that our prayers do have influence,—all the influence to which they are entitled, all that we could, on the whole, desire. We know, too, that the more humble, fervent, and persevering we are, the greater will be the influence of our prayers. How much reason, then, have we to abound in this delightful duty! How much reason to remember the exhortation of the apostle, and "pray always, with all prayer and supplication"!

LECTURE L.

DEATH.

Death is, or should be, a subject of universal and absorbing interest. We see others die, and we know that this great change is soon to pass upon ourselves. We shall close our connection with sublunary things, lose all visible life and motion, and become to the eye of sense as though we had never been. But is death to be the end of us? Is it (what it has sometimes been denominated) an eternal sleep? Or have we a soul, which is to survive the body and live in another state?

Some have argued the immortality of the soul from its indestructible nature, alleging that it must exist forever. But I can see no force in this argument. We know not but the souls of brutes are as indestructible in their nature as our own, and yet no one supposes them immortal. God gave existence to the human soul, and, without doubt, he can destroy that existence if he pleases. Indeed, were he to withdraw his supporting hand, we should, in all probability, sink to our original nothing. The future existence of the soul, like all other created things, hangs suspended on the will of God; and all sound arguments to prove its immortality must be regarded as but so many indications of the divine pleasure. Of this description are various arguments drawn from the light of nature, as

1. The analogy between the soul and the body. The body is not annihilated at death. Not a particle of matter is ever annihilated. But if death does not destroy the substance of the body, how can it be supposed to destroy the soul?

2. The doctrine of the soul's immortality has prevailed, perhaps, among all nations, evincing that this is somehow a

natural sentiment, and that there must be a foundation for it in truth.

3. The natural and universal sense of accountability is an indication of the soul's immortality. This sense of accountableness points us forward to a future reckoning, to a day of account, and, of course, to a state of conscious existence beyond the grave.

4. The capacity of the soul for *unlimited improvement* clearly indicates that opportunities for improvement are to be furnished for it beyond those which exist in the present life. To my own mind, the *limitless capacities* of the soul as clearly indicate that it was made for eternity, as the particular structure and organs of the different kinds of animals indicate that some of them were made to eat flesh, and others grass; that some were made to fly in the air, and some to swim in the water, and some to walk upon the earth. The structure of the animal shows what it was made for, and so the structure and capacities of the human soul show that it must have been made for eternity.

5. From the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments in this life, it may be inferred that there is to be *another life*, where the seeming disorders of the present will be rectified, and where every one will receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil.

Such are some of the arguments—briefly, nakedly stated—which are commonly drawn from the light of nature in proof of the immortality of the soul. But these are all merged and swallowed up, as it were, in the clearer, brighter light of divine revelation. In his word God has *told* us, in a variety of ways, that the soul is to exist forever, and this is enough to satisfy the believer. We have no need to quote passages in proof of this point. The doctrine of immortality is assumed everywhere in the Scriptures. It is one of the plainest and most unquestionable of all the teachings of the book of God.

Some, who believe in a future state, regard death as a *temporary* sleep of the soul,—a *temporary* cessation of rational, conscious existence. They suppose that the *entire man* rests in the grave until the resurrection, when his conscious existence will be renewed. As this opinion has been commonly based on the

materiality of the human soul, in considering it, it may be proper to observe,—

1. That the soul of man *is not material.* Of this we may be certain from its properties. We know nothing about either matter or mind except from their properties; but the entirely different properties which they exhibit, clearly indicate that they are, in nature, distinct the one from the other. Does matter think and reason, feel and act? Does it form plans, and draw conclusions; remember the past, anticipate the future, and send abroad its soaring conceptions through immensity and eternity? On the contrary, has mind, like matter, solidity and extension? Is it capable of being divided, separated into parts? Has it length, breadth, shape, and thickness? Is it a compounded substance, like the body, and capable of being resolved into its elementary ingredients? Questions such as these require no answer. The bare propounding of them is enough to convince any one, that between the acknowledged properties of matter and mind there is an utter dissimilarity. There is no likeness or approximation of the one to the other. Since, then, we know nothing either of matter or mind but from their properties, and since the properties of each are so totally different, how shall we resist the conclusion that the substances themselves are different, and that as the one is material, the other must be immaterial or spiritual?

There is another argument for the spiritual nature of the soul, growing out of the fact of our *personal identity.* We are conscious of being the same persons that we were years ago. We really *are* the same. But in what respects the same? Certainly not in respect to the body, or to anything about us of a material nature; for the body is continually changing; and the same is true of all material things. The processes of decomposition, dissolution, and reconstruction are ever going on. If, then, the whole man is material, and there is no difference, in point of substance, between the soul and the body, where, I ask, is his continued personal identity? Manifestly it is taken away. There is no such thing. And our consciousness of personal identity is but vulgar prejudice, a delusion. It is only on the supposition that man has a soul, distinct from the body,

immaterial and incorruptible, that identity can be predicated of him from one day and hour to another.

But if man has a soul distinct from the body, immaterial, spiritual, in point of substance like its Creator; then, obviously, it may exist separate from the body. It may retain a conscious, active existence, when the body is dead. God, who is a spirit, exists without a material body. And the same may be said of the angels, both the holy and the fallen. They exist, without material bodies. And if the soul of man is in substance like them, then why may not *it* also exist in a disembodied state? But,—

2. The Scriptures assure us that it does so exist. Stephen did not believe that his soul was about to die with his body, when he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Neither did Paul expect to sleep, soul and body, in the grave, for thousands of years, when he said, "I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. i. 23). Solomon assures us, that when the body "returns to the dust, as it was, the spirit returns to God who gave it" (Ecc. xii. 7). It was while the bodies of Abraham, and the rich man, and Lazarus, lay mouldering in the grave, that their souls are represented as existing, speaking, and acting in another state (Luke xvi. 24). Christ said to the penitent thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). He said also of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that they were, in some sense, living, hundreds of years after their bodies had been dead. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Mat. xxii. 32). Paul tells us, that when saints are "absent from the body, they are present with the Lord;" that whether they "wake or sleep, they live together with Christ;" and that in the heavenly Jerusalem dwell "the spirits of just men made perfect" (2 Cor. v. 8; 1 Thess. v. 10; Heb. xii. 23). John saw, in vision, the souls of the murdered martyrs, and they cried, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth?" (Rev. vi. 10.)

These passages are plain and decisive. They teach, unequivocally, that man, at death, does not cease to be an intelligent, active being. Though his body returns to the dust, his spirit

lives. It ceases not to exercise its noble faculties, unclogged, unencumbered, in another state.

There is but another supposition, in regard to the change which takes place in death. If the soul does not sleep with the body, either temporarily or eternally, but still lives and is active in another state, then death must be a dissolution, a separation between these two parts of the human constitution. They have been closely and mysteriously united here upon earth; but now their union is dissolved; they are separated. And this separation, with its immediate concomitants, constitutes the whole of that great physical change which is denominated death.

It may be remarked further, in regard to the great change of which we are speaking, that it terminates the period of man's probation. This is a disputed proposition, particularly in reference to those who die in their sins. It is believed, by many, that such will have a season of probation, a space for repentance, beyond the grave; and that after a long period of suffering,—long enough to be set forth by the Scripture terms forever and ever,—all will at length be purified and raised to heaven. But this whole doctrine of a future probation and restoration is refuted by a variety of considerations, drawn both from reason and the Word of God.

1. If the wicked are to be on probation in the future world, why not the righteous? If it is possible for the former class to be restored and saved after death, why not for the latter to fall away and perish? There is no better foundation, either in Scripture or reason, for the one of these suppositions than for the other.

2. The notion of a state of trial after death is unreasonable, because it is unnecessary. Cannot God prolong our probation, in this life, to any extent he pleases? Can he not use with us here such means as he pleases; and give them such efficacy as he pleases; and convert and save all from this world whom he pleases to save? What need, then, of any other probation? What good purpose can it answer? On this ground, the miseries of the other world, be they longer or shorter, would seem to be a needless waste, and more difficult to be reconciled with the goodness of God, than the idea of eternal punishment.

3. According to the views which the Scriptures give us of the other world, it has no fitness or adaptation to be a state of trial. It is unfitted for such a state, on several accounts. It is so because of its duration. The wicked are to go away from the judgment "into everlasting punishment." The smoke of their torment is to "ascend up forever and ever." Now, admitting that these terms denote a limited period, they certainly set forth a very long period,—one altogether too long to be appointed, or used as a season of probation. God does not need to try his creatures forever and ever, in order to form and develop their characters. Nor does he need to punish them forever and ever in order to their conversion.

But the future world is unfitted to be a state of trial on other accounts besides its duration. There is too much light there to admit of any proper trial of faith. The truth will so shine out in that world that it cannot possibly be rejected. God's truth may be rejected here on earth; but in the future life it cannot be. The very "devils believe, and they tremble."

In that world, too, there are not those ceaseless fluctuations, those conflicting influences, good and bad, those mingled temptations and restraints, which constitute, in great measure, our probation here. The saints in glory, delivered from all trying changes and corrupting influences, move onward and upward in their heavenly way; while the wicked in hell are left to sin on and go down, without further interruption or restraint.

Again, in the world below, there are none of those means of grace, and strivings of the Spirit, which enter into the very idea of probation for a better life. We have no reason to think that the Bible is read there, or the gospel preached, or the Holy Spirit poured out; and without these, what would a probation in hell be worth?

4. In opposition to the idea of a probation beyond the grave, it may be remarked that sinners often finish, virtually, their state of trial, long before they leave the present world. This is the case with those who have committed the unpardonable sin. This, too, is the case with the more numerous class, who have finally grieved away the Holy Spirit, and are judicially abandoned. Such were the mass of the ten tribes of Israel in the

days of the prophet Hosea. "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone" (Hos. iv. 17). Such were the hardened Jews, in the days of our Saviour. "Oh, that thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! But now they are hidden from thine eyes" (Luke xix. 42). Such, also, were some of whom the apostle speaks: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 11). There have been persons of this description, it may be feared, in all periods of the world. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. vi. 3). When God's Spirit is finally grieved away, and the soul is abandoned,—as is often the case with persons in the present life,—their probation is virtually ended. It has ended in fact, though not in form. And now is it likely that such persons will have another probation beyond the grave. They have provoked God to abandon them, even in this life. Is it likely that he will undertake again for them in the life to come?

5. That there is no probation for the wicked beyond the grave, is evident, since we are nowhere encouraged or authorized to pray for the dead. It was not till the Jews, in the days of Jeremiah, had become incorrigible, and were abandoned of God that this holy man was forbidden to pray for them (Jer. vii. 16). It is because there is no longer any hope for those who have committed the sin unto death, that Christians are not permitted to pray for them (1 John v. 16). And it can only be because there is no longer any hope for those who die in their sins, that we are nowhere encouraged or authorized in the Scriptures to pray for them. The doctrine of purgatorial fire, and the practice of praying for the dead, have always existed in the church together; and from the fact that this practice is manifestly unscriptural, we infer that the doctrine is not true.

6. Those who believe in a future probation, and in the final restoration of the wicked,—for the two subjects cannot be entirely separated,—regard the punishments of the other world as altogether disciplinary. They are designed, not for the public good, but for the good of the sufferer. They are the chas-

tisements of a kind father, to bring the disobedient child to repentance. But if this be true, then the punishments of the other world are not a curse, but a blessing. They are evidence, not of God's displeasure, but his love. "Whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. xii. 6). And to be delivered from these merciful inflictions, at least before they shall have accomplished their end, must be, not a favor, but an injury. I need not stop to show how opposite these conclusions are to the current representations of the Bible,—where the inhabitants of hell are spoken of as under the curse of God,—as the objects of his displeasure, his indignation, his wrath, his vengeance. (See 2 Thess. i. 8, 9; Jude 7.)

7. It is involved in the idea of a probation and restoration beyond the grave, that sinners suffer, previous to their being restored, all that they deserve. They deserve that measure of suffering, of discipline, which is necessary in order to bring them to repentance. Consequently, when they are brought to repentance, and thus prepared for a release, they owe nothing further to the law. They have paid the uttermost farthing. But on this ground, what have they to be forgiven? And for what are they indebted to Christ? And what grace will there be in their deliverance and salvation? No one need be told how entirely opposed such a theory is to the spirit and language of the New Testament on this subject. If the latter is true, the former cannot be.

8. If there is to be a probation and restoration in the other world, it is important to ascertain, if possible, when this is to be expected. Is it to be before or after the general judgment? That it cannot be before the judgment is obvious from several considerations. In the first place, the Scriptures decide that between death and the judgment there are to be no important changes. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death, the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). Then, in the judgment, men are to be tried for their actions while in the body; which shows that it was only while in the body that they were on probation (2 Cor. v. 10). Besides, in the day of judgment, the wicked will be still unreclaimed. This is evident from many

passages,[1]—proving that if there is to be a probation between death and the judgment, it will be to no good purpose.

That there will be no probation after the judgment is also evident from several considerations. On this ground, it may be inquired, in the first place, why there should be any general judgment? Why so long preparation for that grand and decisive scene, if, after all, it is not to be decisive,—if its awards are liable to be rescinded or reversed? Then it must be remembered, that immediately following the resurrection and the general judgment, Christ resigns his mediatorial office and kingdom (1 Cor. xv. 24–28). Of course, there will be no further opportunity for the return of sinners to God, at least through a Mediator. Accordingly, we find it said, expressly, of those who are unjust at the close of the judgment, that they shall be unjust still; and of those who are filthy, that they shall be filthy still (Rev. xxii. 11). If there is to be no probation and restoration, either before the judgment or after it, it devolves on those who believe in a restoration to tell us definitely when it shall be.

9. In opposition to the notion of probation and restoration beyond the grave, I urge further, that hell is no place for the reformation of offenders. It is the prison of evil spirits; the place "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). Take all the righteous out of this world, and leave the wicked to revel and riot here alone, and what would the state of society be? Would any restoring, reforming influence be left? What, then, must be the state of society in hell, and what the influence exerted there by beings upon each other, where devils and damned spirits are crowded together; where every mouth is filled with blasphemy and every heart with sin? Certainly, of all places in the universe, hell is the least fitted to bring about the conversion of sinners, and promote their return to God.

10. I only add further, that the idea of a probation beyond the grave is contradicted by the general current of Scripture. Much that might be said under this head has been anticipated. I shall only observe, therefore, that the Scriptures clearly represent this life as the seed-time, and the only time in which to

[1] See Dan. xii. 2; Matt. xiii. 49; xxv. 32–46; John v. 29.

lay up treasure in heaven (Matt. vi. 20). If we here "sow to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption; but if we sow to the Spirit, we shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. vi. 7). The rich man and Lazarus, after death, are represented as having their states finally and irrevocably fixed. There could be no passing over from the one to the other (Luke xvi. 26). There is to be no change of worlds beyond the grave; but every one is to "receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10).

Such, certainly, is the plain representation of Scripture in regard to this most important subject. And such is the varied, abundant, conclusive evidence, that death is to terminate the probation of man. "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Ecc. xi. 3).

The inquiry often suggests itself to the reflecting mind: Why was death commissioned to ravage our world? Why is it, that all which is born must die?

The procuring cause of death is undoubtedly sin. Although temporal death made no part of the original threatening to our first parents, and constitutes no part of the proper penalty of the law, which is eternal death; still, it is a bitter fruit and consequence of sin, and may, with propriety, be regarded in the light of a punishment. Had we not been sinners, we should not have merited so great an evil, and a just God would not have inflicted it. "By one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. v. 12).

With regard to the final causes of death, or the ends to be answered by it, several things may be said. Death is a proper and perhaps necessary mode of emptying this world of those who have closed their probation in it, and thus making room for others who are to follow. Had there been no death, the world had long ago been filled with human beings, who could neither have lived together, nor destroyed one another. Some mode of exchanging worlds was absolutely necessary; and for sinners like ourselves, we can conceive of none more suitable than that which Infinite Wisdom has appointed.

Then death is calculated to teach us important lessons, and

promote important moral purposes. It shows us the great evil of sin. In the dreadfulness of the effect,—the bitterness of the fruit,—we see how dreadful must be the cause that produces it. It is of sin that God says, "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate!" (Jer. xliv. 4.)

Death is also fitted to show us the vanity of the world; to wean us from it, and to quicken us in our preparation for eternal scenes. To all who have ears to hear, the language of death is: "Work while the day lasts. Do with your might what your hands find to do. Be ye also ready, since ye know not at what hour your Lord doth come."

LECTURE LI.

IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES OF DEATH.

The consequences of death to the human body are too obvious to require description. Immediately on the release of the soul, the body becomes senseless, lifeless, valueless. It is consigned to the grave, and soon moulders back to dust.

The consequences of death to the soul of man are unspeakably more important, and require a more careful consideration. We have seen that the soul does not sleep in death, either temporarily or eternally; but that, while absent from the body, it retains a conscious, active existence. It may be added that it retains a substantial existence. In other words, the world of spirits is not a world of shadows, but of substantial realities,—not less so, certainly, than that in which we now live.

Spirit is a substance, no less than matter,—a different kind of substance, in respect both to its nature and properties; but yet a substance. God is a Spirit, a pure Spirit; but has he not a real, substantial existence,—as real, as substantial, as though he were vested in a material form? Angels, too, are "ministering spirits"; yet they are substantial beings, and capable of exerting prodigious power. The power of spirit over matter is vastly, I had almost said infinitely, greater than that of matter over spirit; and all its properties, operations, and effects indicate for it an existence not less substantial, as I said, than that which we ascribe to matter. The world of spirits, then, is a world of substantial realities.

But where is the world of spirits? When the souls of men depart out of this world, and leave their bodies in the dust, where do they go? Do the righteous ascend at once to heaven, and the wicked go down to hell? Or do both classes go to an

intermediate place,—to different compartments of the same place,—called in the original Scriptures, שְׁאוֹל, and ἅδης, and there remain together, or very near each other, till the resurrection? This latter opinion is maintained by some very respectable critics, and is entitled to a careful consideration.

A principal argument in support of this opinion is drawn from the alleged signification of the word ἅδης. In learning the signification of this word, we must have a special regard, it is said, to its use in the Greek classics, and among the Jews in the days of the apostles. But this word came into the New Testament, not from the Greek classics, nor from Josephus, but from the Septuagint,—where it was introduced as a translation of the corresponding Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל; a word too ancient to receive modification from any classical or contemporaneous authors whose names have come down to us. From this account of the matter it might be presumed that the word ἅδης would be used in the Scriptures in a somewhat peculiar sense; and so, I think, we find it. And its signification must be gathered, not from classic and Jewish authors, but from the book of God.

But it is said that the words שְׁאוֹל and ἅδης are used in the Scriptures to signify a nether world, an intermediate place, into which the spirits of both good and bad men depart at death, and where they are kept until the day of judgment. In reply, I observe that the words in question are used by the sacred writers to signify the grave,—the resting-place of the bodies of both the righteous and the wicked. They are also used to signify hell,—the abode of miserable spirits. But they are never used, so far as I have been able to discover, to signify the abode of the righteous, either before the resurrection or after it.

In by far the greater number of instances, the word שְׁאוֹל is used in the Old Testament, to signify the grave, or the place of sepulture, and is properly so rendered by our translators.[1] But as the grave is regarded by most persons, and was more especially so by the ancients, with awe and dread, as being the region of solitude, gloom, and darkness, so the word denoting it soon came to be applied to that more dark and fearful world which is to be the abode of the miserable forever. Numerous passages

[1] See Gen. xxxvii. 35; xlii. 38; 1 Sam. ii. 6; 1 Kings ii. 6; Job xiv. 13; xvii. 13-16.

to this effect are found in the Old Testament. "A fire is kindled in mine anger, which shall burn to the lowest hell" (Deut. xxxii. 22). "It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know?" (Job xi. 8). "If I ascend up in to heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there" (Ps. cxxxix. 8). "Though they dig into hell, thence shall my hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down" (Amos ix. 3). In these passages, שְׁאוֹל stands in a direct contrast with heaven. Of course, it must mean hell, and is properly so rendered by our translators.

Other Scriptures may be cited which are equally decisive: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God" (Ps. ix. 17). The hell, the שְׁאוֹל here spoken of, certainly is not the grave, nor is it any other place into which the righteous go. "The wicked shall be turned into hell," etc. "Thou shalt beat him (the unruly child) with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." Not from the grave, certainly; nor from any nether world into which both the righteous and the wicked go; but from hell,—the miserable abode of the wicked (Prov. xxiii. 14).

In the New Testament, ἅδης is used much as שְׁאוֹל is in the Old, except that in a less proportion of cases it signifies the grave.

Still there are instances in which the word is used in this sense, as "O grave, where is thy victory!" (1 Cor. xv. 55). In general, however, the ἅδης of the New Testament is no other than the world of future misery. "Thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell." "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell (the powers of the world below) shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xi. 23; xvi. 18). When the rich man died and was buried, "in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torments" (Luke xvi. 23). I know it is said that he was in the lower Tartarian part of ἅδης and that Abraham and Lazarus were in the upper part; and it is urged in proof of this that they were sufficiently near each other to hold conversation. But what evidence have we that Abraham and Lazarus were in ἅδης at all? The Scriptures do not say so, and the supposition is wholly gratuitous. The supposed division of

this place into the two apartments of Paradise and Tartarus is of heathen, and not of Christian origin. We have no trace or intimation of it in the Bible. The fact that Abraham and the rich man were in circumstances to speak to each other, no more proves that they were in different apartments of the same place or world, than does the fact that God and angels are often represented as speaking out of heaven to men, proves that earth and heaven are the same world. Without doubt, spirits can see each other, and hold conversation, at much greater distances than would be possible to us. We certainly know that the rich man and Lazarus were widely and eternally separated. The former "lifted up his eyes, being in torments," and saw the latter "afar off." There was an impassable gulf betwixt them,—wide enough to sever between the everlasting abodes of the righteous and the wicked,—between heaven and hell.

I have said that neither שְׁאוֹל nor ᾅδης is ever used in the Scriptures to signify the abode of the spirits of the just. In opposition to this statement, one passage and only one, can with any plausibility be adduced. David says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. xvi. 10). The Apostle Peter, having quoted this passage, and applied it to Christ, goes on to assure us that David here "spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption" (Acts ii. 31). We have, then, in this verse from the Psalms, a poetical prediction of the resurrection of Christ, and nothing else. The prediction is expressed, after the manner of the Hebrew poets, in a parallelism; the whole import of which is, that Christ was to be raised from the dead, and raised speedily. His life was not to be left in the grave; his flesh was not to see corruption.[1] The שְׁאוֹל and ᾅδης in this passage, properly signify the grave, the sepulchre, out of which Christ was raised, and not the world of future spirits.

Since this passage is the only one on which the semblance of an argument can be founded, that the words in question are ever used, in the Scriptures, to denote the world of happy spirits;

[1] The Hebrew word נֶפֶשׁ, here translated soul, properly signifies *breath, life*, the *vital principle*.

and since, properly interpreted, they have no such meaning here, I am warranted in affirming that they have it nowhere. They signify, primarily, the grave, the place of the dead body; and, secondarily, the world of miserable spirits; but never the future abode of the righteous. Of course, no argument can be drawn from these words, to show that the souls of the righteous, when they leave the body, go into ἅδης, and not to heaven.

Another argument for ἅδης, or the intermediate place, is derived from certain Scriptures in which "things under the earth" are represented as doing homage to the Saviour. "That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth" (Phil. xxi. 10). The "things under the earth" are supposed to be the souls of departed saints, who are shut up somewhere in the bowels of the earth, and who, from those deep caverns, are sending up a spiritual worship to the Saviour. But a comparison of passages will show that the time when every knee shall bow to Christ is the day of judgment. "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Rom. xiv. 10). In the great day of judgment, every creature will do homage of some sort—willing or unwilling—to the Saviour. But then the bodies of the saints will have been raised, and the intermediate region, if there be any, will be deserted. Another passage of the same class is the following: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever" (Rev. v. 13). This grand chorus of praise the holy apostle heard sung in heaven; and every creature in heaven united in it,—even those who had left their bodies to moulder and dissolve on the surface of the earth, or under the earth, or in the sea. But the passage, thus interpreted, not only does not prove an intermediate place, it proves the contrary. It proves that the souls of the righteous dead were, at the time of the vision, in heaven, standing before the throne, and singing praises to God and the Lamb.

Another passage, often appealed to in proof of the interme-

diate place, is that in which Christ is said to have gone and "preached to the spirits in prison" (1 Pet. iii. 19). But who were these "spirits in prison"? Not the holy dead; nor, as some have supposed, the virtuous heathen; but the impious antediluvians, who were disobedient in the days of Noah, and perished in the flood. This is indubitable, from the passage itself. And how did Christ preach to these spirits in prison? Not in person, but by his Spirit,—the Holy Spirit,—that Spirit by the operation of which his lifeless body had been raised from the dead. "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." And when was this preaching by the Spirit accomplished? Not while Christ's lifeless body lay in the tomb, but "when once the long-suffering of God waited, in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." It was during this period that Christ preached by his Spirit, inspiring and assisting Noah, to those who, in Peter's time, were "spirits in prison,"—spirits shut up in the prison of hell. Such is the obvious import of this vexed passage of Scripture; and, thus interpreted, it goes not a step towards proving the doctrine of an intermediate place.

It is further urged, in proof of an intermediate place, that the Scriptures represent the happiness of the righteous as not complete until after the resurrection. The fact here alleged is admitted; but the conclusion drawn from it is denied. It does not follow, because the happiness of the righteous is not complete until after the resurrection, that previously their souls are imprisoned in ἅδης, down in the centre of the earth. On supposition that they go to heaven at death, without doubt their happiness will be increased, when they shall have received their glorified bodies from the dust, and entered on the full rewards of eternity.

Again, it is insisted that the early Christian fathers believed in the doctrine of an intermediate place. It is admitted that such was the belief of many of the fathers, more especially those of the East. It may be accounted for, too, that such should have been their belief, without supposing them to have derived it from the apostles. They were in continual controversy with

the Gnostics, who undervalued the body, considered it as the grand corrupter of the soul, and denied altogether its resurrection. This led those fathers to think and say much of the resurrection of the body and to represent the soul as in a very imperfect condition—*in abditis receptaculis vel in exterioribus atriis*—while the body was entombed. We know, too, what was the effect of this error on the minds of those fathers who adopted it. It led them early to institute prayers for the dead, and resulted, after a time, in the superstitions and abominations of purgatory.

We have now examined the principal arguments in favor of an intermediate place, and find them far from being satisfactory. They fail essentially in establishing the point for which they are adduced.

Let us now look at the arguments on the other side,—those which are urged to show that the souls of the righteous, at death, go immediately to heaven; and those of the wicked, to hell. In doing this, we shall not attempt to fix the locality of either of these places. Suffice it to say, that by heaven we understand the place which John saw in vision on the isle of Patmos,—where is Christ and his holy angels,—where is the throne of God and the Lamb. And by hell, we understand the prison of lost souls,—the place "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41).

We commence with showing that at death, the souls of the righteous go immediately to heaven.

1. As much as this seems to have been indicated to the ancient patriarchs, in the promise of Canaan. These patriarchs regarded the earthly Canaan as an emblem, a type of the heavenly Canaan. In the promises of an earthly inheritance, they read their title to a better country, even a heavenly. So we are assured by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. xi. 14–16). And where did they think this heavenly Canaan lay? Directly across the Jordan, the cold river of death. As the literal Jordan, and that alone, separated them from the earthly Canaan; so, when the river of death was past, they expected to enter, at once, into heaven. Nor were they disappointed. They have gone to heaven. They are spoken of in

the Scriptures as those who "through faith and patience, now inherit the promises" (Heb. vi. 12).

2. Our Saviour's declaration to the dying thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," is proof enough that the souls of believers go immediately from this world to heaven. We know it is said that Paradise is in ἅδης,—the upper and better part of ἅδης. But it is certain, from the Scriptures, that Paradise has no connection with ἅδης. It is heaven,—the third heaven,—where is the throne of God and the Lamb. Of what, we ask, was the earthly Paradise, where grew the literal tree of life, the symbol, the emblem? Not of the better part of ἅδης, if it has any better part, but of heaven,—where grows the tree of life above. The Apostle Paul was once "caught up into the third heaven,"—"into Paradise," where he heard unspeakable words (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4). No person, I am sure, could ever have regarded the apostle, in this passage, as referring to two visions, and two different places, under the names "third heaven" and "Paradise," unless he had first got his notions of Paradise from some foreign source, and then felt it necessary to break in the passage, that it might correspond with his preconceived views. The "Paradise" of Paul, and "the third heaven," are undoubtedly the same place;—the same which our Saviour promised to the dying thief;—the same into which he receives all his faithful people, as soon as they leave the present world.

3. The case of Moses and Elias, on the mount of transfiguration, has an important bearing on the question before us. Moses died and was buried. Elijah was taken to heaven without dying. They both appeared in glory on the mount of transfiguration. And now the question is, Did they both come to the mount from the same heavenly place? That Elijah came from heaven, no one can doubt; and is it possible for any one to doubt that Moses came with him,—came from the same heaven, where they had long been glorified together?

4. Another case, bearing on the question before us, is that of Stephen. Just before his death, he saw the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." And he prayed saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts vii.

59). Who can believe that this prayer was rejected; and that Stephen, instead of being received up to heaven, was sent away into ἅδης there to be imprisoned for thousands of years?

5. The Apostle Paul represents the whole church of God as being, at present, in heaven or on earth. "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. iii. 15). But, according to the doctrine we are considering, a vast proportion of this redeemed family are neither in heaven nor on earth, but in ἅδης,—the dark, sequestered prison of disembodied souls.

6. We are taught, also, by the same apostle, that in the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, there dwell, not only God the Judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and an innumerable company of angels, but the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb. xii. 21–24). All are represented as dwelling together in the same holy, happy place;—a testimony sufficient of itself to settle this whole question.

7. In various places in Paul's epistles the souls of the righteous, while absent from the body, are represented as being with Christ in heaven. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." In other words, we know that when the body dies, the soul will go at once to heaven (2 Cor. v. 1). "We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord;" that is, in heaven (2 Cor. v. 8). Paul says again, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ," that is, in heaven, "which is far better" (Phil. i. 23). And again he says: "Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep" (live or die) "we should live together with him"—in heaven (1 Thess. v. 10).

It will be said, perhaps, that Christ may be, in some sense, in ἅδης, and that Paul expected to be with him there. And so Christ is, in some sense, with his people here on earth; and Paul need have been in no strait betwixt living and dying, in order that he might be, in some sense, with Christ. But could Paul have been, where he desired to be, in the personal presence of the glorified God-man and Mediator, and not have been in heaven? Could he have gone to that building of God, that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," and

still not have been in heaven? Surely, there can be no question here.

8. The beloved disciple, in his visions on the isle of Patmos, saw, in a great many instances, "the spirits of the just made perfect," and they were always in heaven. It was these which sang that new song, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. v. 9). On another occasion, John "saw a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues" (of course, gathered from the earth), "standing before the throne of God, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands" (Rev. vii. 9). On still another occasion, John saw "the Lamb standing on mount Zion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand" redeemed ones, "and they sung a new song," which no beings in heaven could learn or sing, except themselves (Rev. xiv. 1–3). At another time, John saw in heaven "the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (Rev. vi. 9). We might quote many other passages from this wonderful book, proving, as certainly as that there is any heaven, that the souls of redeemed saints are there.

In reply to all this, it has been said, that the place described above, where the spirits of the just surround the eternal throne, and sing the new song of redeeming mercy, is only the better part of ἅδης. But to this I answer, if the upper region of ἅδης is such a place as is described in the Revelation, I have no objection to the thing itself, but only to the bad name by which it is called. For this, surely, is a bad name. It is the name, uniformly, of a bad place. The cold, dark grave is the best place to which it is ever applied in the Scriptures. In the New Testament, it is commonly used to set forth the prison of despair. Why should the blessed abodes of the righteous in the other world be designated by such a name?

But the place described by Paul, in his Epistles, and by John, in the Revelation, is no part of ἅδης. It is heaven. If there be any heaven in the universe, it is here. It is "a house not made

with hands, eternal in the heavens." It is the abode of "an innumerable company of angels." It is near the throne of God and the Lamb. It is repeatedly and expressly called heaven by the Apostle John. In the commencement of his vision, he saw a door opened, not in ἅδης, but in heaven. And the vision throughout is a heavenly vision, in which the glorified spirits of the just are represented as mingling freely with angels, with Jehovah, and the Lamb.

But it is time that we turn to the other part of the subject, and show, in few words, that the souls of the wicked, at death, go immediately to hell,—the place prepared for the devil and his angels. It is admitted, by the advocates of the intermediate place, that the souls of the wicked, when they leave the body, go immediately into punishment; but the place of their punishment, previous to the resurrection, is not hell. It is Tartarus, the lower and more miserable part of ἅδης. But it is certain from the Scriptures that Tartarus is hell,—the very prison of the devils,—the place prepared for their confinement and punishment. So it is represented in the only place in the New Testament where mention is made of Tartarus. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but ταρταρώσας having cast them down to Tartarus, he delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. ii. 4). Here, then, is that place prepared for the devil and his angels, into which the wicked of our race are to be plunged at the close of the last judgment. "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). Beyond all question, this place is hell,—the hell of the New Testament. And if it still be insisted that this is in ἅδης, I admit it; for ἅδης is hell,—in the sense in which our Saviour and his apostles commonly used the term. In two or three instances they employed it to signify the grave; but much more frequently to denote the prison of devils and damned souls; in which case, it has the same meaning, substantially, as Tartarus and Gehenna, and is, with the utmost propriety, rendered hell.

Whether the righteous and the wicked, after the judgment, will go to precisely the same localities in which they were before placed, it is not material to inquire. But both before and after

the judgment, the righteous will be in the same place with the glorified Saviour, and his holy angels; and this will be heaven. And before and after the judgment, the wicked will be in the place prepared for the devil and his angels; and this will be hell. It may be added, too, that both before and after the judgment, heaven and hell will not be the same place, nor different parts of the same general region; but will be widely and eternally separated the one from the other.

I have thus examined, in as few words as possible, the question of an intermediate place, and find no foundation for it in the word of God. It is of heathen and not Christian origin, and better becomes a believer in the mythology of Greece and Rome than a disciple of the Saviour. I regard the theory, too, as of dangerous influence. Could it be generally received by evangelical Christians, it would be followed, I have no doubt, in a little time, with prayers for the dead, and with the doctrine of a future probation and restoration,—perhaps, with all the superstitions of purgatory. This is the course which things took in the ancient church, and in all probability they would take the same again. Let us, then, "hold fast the form of sound words" on this subject,—the words of Scripture, and of most of our Protestant confessions of faith,—and not be "driven about by every wind of doctrine."

There are several other questions, connected with the subject before us, which demand attention, but which may be disposed of in few words. It has been asked whether the disembodied soul passes through any trial or judgment previous to the resurrection. That it does, is intimated in several Scriptures, and is in accordance with the common apprehension of Christians. Thus we speak of a person, when dead, as having gone with his account to God. The truth of the matter seems to be this: The soul, immediately on leaving the body, wakes up to a full consciousness of its character and state. It may have been asleep before, but it is awake now. It perceives clearly and at once what manner of spirit it is of, and for what world it is destined. By going with its account to God, we are not to understand that it goes into a visible court, or before a literal judgment-seat. God is present everywhere; and the moment

the soul leaves the body it is made fully conscious of the divine presence, and conscious of its own character and destiny. It is judged, at once, in the presence of God. It judges itself, passes sentence upon itself, and (under the convoy of angels, perhaps) enters at once upon its award, either of happiness or misery. A judgment such as this does not at all interfere with, or supersede the necessity of, a general judgment; as we shall see, when we come upon that subject.

It may be inquired again, whether departed spirits recognize each other, and renew former acquaintance and intercourse, in the future world. That they may and do, is very evident from Scripture. Did not Moses and Elias know each other, when they appeared on the mount of transfiguration? Are not Abraham, and the rich man and Lazarus, represented as perfectly knowing each other? The deceased kings of the earth are represented as knowing the king of Babylon, and as taunting over him, when he came down to join them in the world below (Is. xiv. 10–20). The souls of the martyrs, under the heavenly altar, undoubtedly knew each other, and sympathized in each other's joys (Rev. vi. 10). Indeed, the fact about which we here inquire seems rather to be taken for granted, than directly asserted, in the various representations of Scripture on the subject. And this, certainly, is a very interesting fact. How much will it add to the happiness of heaven, for spirits in that world to know each other; and there to renew former acquaintance and joys! While it will add as much to the miseries of the wicked, in the world below, that they are obliged to know each other, and to be the accusers and tormentors one of another forever.

Still another inquiry may be, whether departed spirits have any means of becoming acquainted with what is transacted here on the earth. I cannot doubt that they have such means. They may keep up a direct intercourse with earth; though in regard to this, the Scriptures afford us no positive information. But it is certain that the angels, both the holy and the fallen, have much to do in this world. They know what is transpiring here, and may carry intelligence to the world of spirits. It is certain, also, that multitudes are constantly going from this world to

that, who may carry intelligence. At any rate, spirits in the other world are represented as knowing, to some extent, what is transacted here. The repentance of a sinner is quickly known in heaven, and spreads a new tide of joy over all the myriads congregated there. The souls under the altar knew that their blood had not, at that time, been avenged on their persecutors. The rich man in hell knew that his five brethren were still living, and that they were likely to follow him to that place of torment. Indeed, it is not unlikely that spirits in the other world feel a deep interest in the transactions of earth,—especially in those transactions which relate more directly to the kingdom of Christ,—and kept up an intimate acquaintance with them.

In conceiving of the enjoyments and sufferings of departed souls, we must, of course, separate from them all that is corporeal, sensual, or animal, leaving only such as are, in their nature, adapted to the capacities of disembodied spirits. The investigation and discovery of truth, the approbation of conscience, pleasing recollections and anticipations, the society of the blessed, the presence of Christ, communion with God, and a heart full to overflowing of holy love; such are some of the sources of happiness to the spirits of the just made perfect in heaven;—while the opposite of these are sources of anguish to spirits lost. Tortures of conscience; painful recollections and forebodings; the unrestrained indulgence of the most hateful passions, such as malice, envy, revenge, and rage; mutual criminations and blasphemies; and the blackness of despair;—all these things, and others like them, are the portion of the wicked, and go to fill up the bitterness of their cup. It is perfectly obvious that the miseries of lost spirits, though not in that world corporeal, may be intense. A tossed, wounded, agonized spirit, who can bear?

LECTURE LII.

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

The doctrine of the resurrection has respect rather to the body than the soul. The soul of man is strictly immortal. It does not die. Of course, it cannot be raised from the dead. It is the body which becomes inert and lifeless in the moment of dissolution. It is this which "returns to the earth, as it was." But we are taught in the Scriptures that the body shall not always sleep in the dust. The hour is coming when the slumbering, mouldering body shall be reanimated,—when soul and body shall be again united to part no more.

But is the same body which died to be raised up? Or, in the resurrection, are we to have different bodies? To this I answer, that—in common, popular language, such as the inspired writers are accustomed to use on all subjects—the raised body is to be the same as that which died. This, however, does not imply strict identity of substance, or that the particles raised are precisely the same—no more and no less—than those which were laid down in death. This is not implied in identity of body, as the terms are commonly used among men. I pass a huge rock, or a high mountain, which I had occasion to pass some years ago. I call it the same rock and the same mountain; and I speak the truth. As language is commonly used and understood, it is the same. Yet who would venture to affirm that there had been no accretions, no diminutions, no change of particles whatever?

The identity here is that of general appearance, conformation, and locality. The term is used with still greater latitude, and is applied on a somewhat different principle, in reference to living, organized bodies. I look at a plant in my garden, soon

after its appearance above the ground. I notice it again, after some weeks, when its size is increased many fold. I call it the same plant, and I speak truly. It is so. I set out a tree, by the roadside, when it is a mere sapling. I watch its growth, from year to year, till it becomes a tall shade. I think and speak of it, all the while, as the same tree; and I speak truly. It is the same. But how so? On what principle is identity predicated here? Not that there has been no change of particles; for there has been a great change,—perhaps a total change. Not that there is the same general appearance and conformation; for these may have entirely changed. The chief ground on which identity is here predicated seems to be this: There is the same vital, animating principle, which, amid all the changes through which the plant or tree has passed, has been constantly at work, drawing together nutriment from the atmosphere and earth, and building up a body for itself; and in popular language, such as every one uses and understands, it is the same body.

This use of language applies, not only to vegetables, but animals. I have the same horse that I had a year ago. He has the same head, and feet, and color, and bones, and skin. No one understands, however, from this, that there has been no change, during the year, in the material of the creature's body. There has been a change,—a great change. But the animating principle remaining the same, and supplying, by its regular operation, the wastes that have been constantly going on, the body of the animal—in the common, popular use of terms—has been, and is, the same.

So I have myself the same body that I had ten years ago,—not the same particles throughout,—perhaps not one of them; but yet, in common language (which is the language of Scripture) the same.

It is on this principle, mainly, that I suppose the resurrection body will be the same with that which was laid down in death; —not strictly and universally the same substance, and yet truly and properly—as words are used and understood—the same body.

I am aware that some divines believe there is a part of the

human body which is never changed, not even between death and the resurrection;—that a portion of the identical substance which belongs to the body at death, rises with it in the final day. Whether this be so, or not, I pretend not to say. It would be impossible, I am sure, to prove the contrary. Still, I do not think it necessary to establish such an hypothesis in order to prove the identity of the raised body. If the animating principle is the same in the resurrection that it was in death (which no one doubts), and if its powers are then successfully exerted to draw to itself a body; the body which it receives will be, to all intents and uses, the same body that it once had. The man will know it to be the same, just as I know my body is the same that it was years ago. It will be recognized and acknowledged by others to be the same. In popular language, which, I repeat, is the language of the Bible, it is the same.

This view of the identity of the raised body is precisely that (if I understand him) of the Apostle Paul. He asserts, repeatedly and most expressly, that it is to be the same body. The same *it* that is sown in corruption, dishonor, and weakness is to be raised in incorruption, in glory, and in power. The same *it* that is sown a natural body is to be raised a spiritual body. And yet the apostle plainly teaches that there is to be some change of particles, of substance. "Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him; and to every seed his own body" (1 Cor. xv. 37–44). I know not how to understand the whole representation of the apostle in this chapter, without supposing that strict identity of substance is not essential, in popular language, to identity of body.

It should be further remarked that the raised body, though, in the sense explained, the same that died, will not be raised in the same state or condition. This would not be, in most cases, desirable. Myriads of the human family die in mere infancy. But it would not be desirable for them to receive infant bodies from the tomb, and be united to them forever. The bodies of some are shockingly mutilated; others are crippled and deformed. The bodies of most people who die by

disease, become unnaturally bloated or fearfully emaciated before they leave the world. Now, it would not be desirable for the saints to rise in this state, and continue in it through all the endless years of heaven. Their bodies, it is said, are to "be raised in glory," and to "be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body." I incline to the opinion, that, in whatever condition believers may have laid down their bodies, they will receive them in maturity and perfection;—not dwarfed in infancy, nor crippled with age, nor bloated or emaciated with disease; but such, as to appearance and comeliness, as they would have been in their most mature and perfect state.

The raised body will also be greatly changed as to properties. It will be not a gross body of flesh and blood, but ethereal and incorruptible. It will be in the language of the apostle, "a spiritual body." This does not imply that it will be spirit, and not matter. It will still be a material body; but the matter of it will be so changed as to its properties, so sublimated and refined, so adapted to the embrace and use of an immortal spirit, that it may properly be termed a "spiritual body."

By the explanations of the resurrection which have been given, we avoid the common objections which are urged against it. The first and principal of these grows out of the continual change which is going on in our present bodies, connecting the same particles often with different bodies, and rendering it impossible that the identical substance, which constitutes our bodies at death, should in all cases enter into them in the resurrection at the last day. But to the doctrine of the resurrection, as above explained, this, obviously, is no objection. We have seen that strict and universal identity of substance is not necessary to identity of body. Identity of body, at least in the common acceptation of the terms, does not require it. The sameness of which the Scriptures speak is based on quite another principle.

But it is said, if there is not identity of substance, then the deceased body and the raised body are two different things. There is no relation of sameness between them. It is like a man's receiving a new coat when the old one is worn out, and has been for some time laid aside. But to this it is enough to

reply that a man's body is not a coat, nor is his coat a body. The body of a man is an integral part of himself,—sustained and animated by his life, and quickened by his soul and spirit. And the raised body belongs to the same spirit, and is animated by the same, as before. It constitutes a part, and an important part, of the same person. In strict propriety, therefore, as terms are used, it may be denominated the same body.

Having now explained the doctrine of the resurrection, and in so doing freed it from the more common objections which are urged against it, I proceed to the proof of the doctrine itself. It is obvious that this must be drawn wholly from the Scriptures. Reason teaches the immortality of the soul, but not the resurrection of the body. Of course, mere reason has nothing to say against it; and some analogies may be drawn from reason and nature, showing that the doctrine is not improbable. Still, the doctrine is one which the mere light of nature does not teach, and of which those who have had no other light have, in all ages, been ignorant. In proof of this doctrine I remark,—

1. That it is taught in the Old Testament. It may be presumed that the resurrection is taught in the Old Testament, from the fact that the Jews, or the better part of them, in the time of Christ, were firm believers in it; and they could have learned it from no other source. But let us look into the Old Testament itself. Job says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me" (Job xix. 23–27). This I allow, is, in the original, an obscure passage, and one that will admit of another rendering. But the question is not, what rendering may be put upon it, but what is the most natural and obvious signification of the words. And this, I undertake to say, is substantially that which our translators have given. The connection also shows that this is the true rendering. In the introduction to the passage, we see that Job is about to enunciate something which he deems of vast importance to the world;—something which must be most ineffaceably written, which must go down to the coming ages,

which must never be forgotten. "O that my words were now written? O that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen, and lead, in the rock forever!" What now is the rapt seer and prophet about to say? What that is worthy to follow an introduction such as this? Is he merely about to tell us that he expects to be cured of his boils, to be a well man again, and that some one will at length arise to vindicate his character? Is this all? Or is he about to say what, with his eye fixed upon the distant and glorious future, he actually does say: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand, at the latter day, upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"? To my own mind, there can be no question here. Our translators have given us the true idea. And the passage is a valid and glorious proof, not only of the future coming of Christ, but of the resurrection from the dead.

The doctrine of the resurrection is repeatedly brought into view in the Psalms: "Therefore, my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. xvi. 9, 10). This passage is quoted by the Apostle Peter, as being fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ (Acts ii. 26). Again the Psalmist says: "But God shall redeem me from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me" (Ps. xlix. 15). In the prophets, we have passages such as these: "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Is. xxix. 19). "I will ransom thee from the power of the grave; I will redeem thee from death. O death, I will be thy plague! O grave, I will be thy destruction!" (Hos. xiii. 6.) "Many," or the many, the multitude, "that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and so meto shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2). In view of these and other like passages, it is not strange that the more enlightened Jews, in the time of Christ, should have believed in the resurrection of the body. We see not how

they could honestly have disbelieved it, or been in ignorance or doubt respecting it.

2. The most prominent fact of the New Testament, bearing directly on the question before us, is the resurrection of Christ. That Christ was literally raised from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion, I need not now stop to prove. This fact was denied by the Gnostics in the primitive age, and is denied by some in our own times. But this denial is a flat contradiction of the Scriptures. If anything can be proved from the testimony of the apostles, it is that Christ was literally raised from the dead. But if Christ rose from the dead, then his people will rise also. This the Apostle Paul not only asserts, but argues at considerable length. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." "Christ the first fruits; afterwards, they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. xv. 20). The resurrection of Christ proves, not only the possibility and desirableness of a resurrection, but the certainty of it to all his people. As the head of the body is risen, it cannot be doubted that, in due time, the members will rise also.

3. Another fact bearing on the question before us is the rising of those saints who came forth from their graves at the resurrection of Christ. At the time of Christ's death, we are told that "the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matt. xxvii. 52). There was a literal resurrection of the bodies of the saints. Their tombs were opened by the earthquake at the death of Christ, and they came out of them immediately after his resurrection. They rose with their divine Lord, as a kind of first fruits from the dead; as an earnest and pledge of that general resurrection which shall at length be accomplished by his power.

4. Our Saviour taught, in the plainest terms, the resurrection of the body. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 28, 29).

"This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 39, 40). "Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear shall live" (John v. 25). "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matt. v. 29, 30). "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell" (Matt. x. 28). In both these passages the bodies of the wicked are represented as to be cast into hell. Of course their bodies must be raised, or the declaration cannot be fulfilled.

I need not quote more of our Saviour's words in proof of the point under consideration. His language is so plain and explicit that there is no possible way of getting over it, but by supposing him to have temporized in the matter, in accommodation to the prejudices of the Jews.

5. Let us now consider the testimony of Paul as to the resurrection of the body. That Paul preached what he called the resurrection is on all sides admitted; but then some think that he meant by it no more than the doctrine of immortality,—the immortality of the soul. But that this cannot be true is evident from two considerations. In the first place, the immortality of the soul is not a fruit, a consequence, of the mediation of Christ. The souls of men would have been immortal if they had never sinned, or if, when they had sinned, no plan of redemption had been revealed. But the resurrection which Paul preached does stand in immediate connection with the mediation of Christ. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in

Christ shall all be made alive" (Cor. xv. 21). Then, the doctrine of immortality was not a new one to the heathen. It was what the wiser among them had always believed. But the resurrection which Paul preached was new to the heathen; yea, more than this, it was strange and incredible. When the Athenians "heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." The Stoics and Epicureans said, "What will this babbler say? He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; because Paul preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection". (Acts xvii. 18, 32). It is evident from both the considerations here referred to, that Paul must have preached something more than the mere doctrine of immortality. He preached the resurrection of the body; as the language of his epistles conclusively shows.

"He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11). "Who shall change your vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body" (Phil. iii. 21). We have already referred to Paul's argument, in proof of the resurrection, contained in the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians. He begins with inferring the resurrection of believers from the resurrection of Christ (vs. 12–23). He then speaks of the manner of the resurrection, and of the kind of bodies with which the glorified saints will appear (vs. 35–50). He closes the discussion in the following animating, triumphant language: "Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we" (the living) "shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (vs. 51–55.)

There is a passage, equally decisive, in Paul's first Epistle to the Thessalonians: "I would not have you ignorant, brethren,

concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others that have no hope. For, if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent" (anticipate) "them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first;" that is, before the living are changed. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 13–17).

The fact brought out in these passages, in regard to such Christians as shall be alive at the coming of Christ, has an important bearing on the question before us. It seems that their bodies are not to die, but to be instantly changed,—changed into immortal and glorious bodies,—and they are to go up, soul and body, to meet their Lord. The only question then is, Are the dead saints to be made equal to them,—to be like them? If so, their bodies must be raised from the dead,—must also become immortal and glorious,—that they may all stand alike and together before the throne of the Son of man.

In short, the testimony of Paul is so explicit on the point before us, that those who deny the resurrection of the body can only say that his inspiration may have failed him here; he may have been mistaken; and we are not bound to receive such a doctrine simply because he taught it.

Most of the Scriptures above quoted refer to the resurrection of believers. But this is not the case with them all. There is abundant evidence of the resurrection of the wicked. They shall be raised "to shame and everlasting contempt." They shall come forth "unto the resurrection of damnation."

The time of the general resurrection has been sufficiently indicated in the passages already quoted. It is to be on the morning of the last day,—the day of judgment. Then the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and the living will be changed. Then all the glorified saints will be

caught up together, to meet their Lord in the air, and dwell forever with him; while all the wicked then alive, or who ever have lived, will go away accursed to their own place,—the place "prepared for the devil and his angels."

Some have supposed that the righteous dead would be raised much sooner than this, even previous to the millennium; and that they would reign personally with Christ on the earth during the whole of that period. This opinion is founded on a passage in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation: "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and the word of God, ... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. xx. 4–6).

We will not here consider the question of the personal reign of Christ on the earth during the millennium. That will come up in another place. As to the resurrection of the bodies of the holy dead, previous to the millennium, and their living on the earth during that period, I remark, in the first place, that the passage above quoted, even if taken literally, does not sustain such an idea. It is the resurrection of the martyrs only, and not of all the holy dead, of which the sacred writer speaks. And then it was "the souls of them that had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus," and not their raised bodies, which he in vision saw.

But is the passage before us to be taken literally? It stands in the midst of a chapter, and of a book, the other parts of which are, in general, to be understood figuratively or symbolically; and why should not this be interpreted in the same way? No one supposes that, at the commencement of the millennium, a literal angel is to come down from heaven, holding in his hand a literal key and chain; and that he will literally lay hold of a literal dragon, and literally bind him, and cast him into a literal

pit, and shut him up, and set a literal seal upon him, that he should go out no more for a thousand years. Every one supposes that this part of the chapter, and indeed all the parts of it, unless it be the verses above quoted, should be understood figuratively or symbolically. And why, again we ask, should not these verses be interpreted in the same way?

Thus interpreted, they import, not a literal resurrection of the martyrs, but a revival of the martyrs' spirit. The martyrs will live again very much as Elijah lived in John the Baptist. John came in the spirit and power of Elijah. So the martyrs are to rise and live, in spirit, all through the millennium. Their spirit is to revive and predominate in the earth. In other words, the millennium is to be a time of preëminent holiness. Christ will reign on earth spiritually and universally, and the martyr-spirit, being restored, will live and reign with him.

Such, as it seems to me, is the true import of the passage before us; and, thus interpreted, it furnishes no ground for the idea of a literal, pre-millennial resurrection of the martyrs,—much less of all the holy dead.

The doctrine of the resurrection was perverted and denied even in the apostolic age. There were those then who said, "There is no resurrection; or, if there be any, it is passed already" (1 Cor. xv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 18). The individuals here referred to were, probably, of the Gnostic class. They regarded matter as essentially corrupting,—the source and centre of all evil. Under the influence of this error they "neglected the body," and practised all manner of austerities upon it. And they could not believe, when once the body was shaken off, and resolved back to dust, that it ever would be again assumed. They held to a spiritual renovation or resurrection, and that, in respect to true Christians, this was past already. It was against these perverters of the truth that the Apostle Paul reasoned, in the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and cautioned Timothy, in his second and last epistle to him.

The doctrine of the resurrection has been denied and ridiculed by modern infidels, and by some whole sects of religionists. It is to be regarded, however, as a plainly revealed, an important and comforting doctrine of God's holy truth.

LECTURE LIII.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

By a general judgment, we understand the judging of God's intelligent creatures together, in one vast assembly. This is a very different thing from that individual judgment which is to be passed upon us, or which we shall be led to pass upon ourselves at death; and many Scriptures may be quoted to prove the latter, which do not go to the extent of establishing the former.

1. Let us first inquire as to the fact of a general judgment. Our only guide on this question is the Bible; and what is the testimony of Scripture in regard to it?

Frequent mention is made, in the New Testament, of the day of judgment; and it is evident, from a comparison of passages, that this is not, to each one, the day of his death, but a specific period or day, which is to synchronize with the general conflagration, or the end of the world. "The heavens and the earth, which are now, are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment." And again: "The day of the Lord" (the same as the day of judgment) "will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up" (2 Pet. iii. 7, 12). We see, in these passages, when the day of judgment is to come. It is to be, not to each one the day of his death, but to all the day of final conflagration, when this earth, with all its contents, shall be consumed.

We read much in the New Testament of the coming of Christ, and the appearing of Christ; and though, in some instances, these expressions may be used with reference to other events,

they in general refer to his coming to judge the world at the last day. We quote the following passages as examples: "We say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and of the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. iv. 15). The coming of Christ here refers to his triumphal descent at the day of judgment, when all the dead shall be raised and the living will be changed. We have the same reference in the following passage: "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 1).

In other passages, Paul says: "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ;" and "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ;"—importing that there is to be a judgment-seat, before which all the human family are to be gathered together.

Referring to this very scene,—his final appearing to judge the world,—our Saviour says: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. xxv. 31, 32). The only objections to this proof-text is that it stands connected with a series of predictions, some of which have an undoubted reference to the destruction of Jerusalem. Hence it is concluded that this must refer to the same event. But this conclusion is by no means admissible. Our Saviour had been predicting the destruction of the Jewish Temple. "Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." The disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The disciples here inquired respecting the predicted overthrow of the Jewish temple and state, which they supposed was to continue to the end of the world. They had no idea, at this time, that the Jewish rites were ever to be superseded, or

that the Jewish commonwealth was to be destroyed, until the world was destroyed with it. Consequently, they inquired, When is to be this predicted overthrow of Jerusalem, and the end of the world? not doubting that both would come to an end together. In his reply, our Saviour spoke of the destruction both of Jerusalem and of the world; connecting the two together as type and antitype. In the former part of his discourse, the language refers more particularly to the destruction of Jerusalem; and in the latter part, to the end of the world. In several places, his expressions may be understood as having a primary fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem, and an ultimate reference to the end of the world. The verses quoted above, with those that follow them to the end of the chapter, have, clearly, an exclusive reference to the day of judgment and the end of the world. They can refer to nothing else. Certain it is that they were not fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem. Nothing at all answering to them at that time took place. They may be regarded, therefore, as an express prediction, from the lips of the Saviour, of a general judgment; and sufficient of themselves to settle the question that such an event is most assuredly to be expected.

I shall quote but another passage in proof of the point before us,—a point which already has been fully established. In the book of Revelation, after the account of the millennium, and of the great defection at the close of the millennium, and of the final overthrow of the kingdom of Satan, the writer says: "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And the books were opened; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged, every man, according to their works" (Rev. xx. 11). Here is another plain and incontestable prediction of a general judgment, which is to take place at the time of the general resurrection, at the end of the world, when

the entire human family are to stand and be judged together, according to their works.

2. The time of the general judgment. In settling the question as to the fact of a general judgment we have, incidentally, determined the time of it. It is to follow immediately upon the general resurrection, and to synchronize with the final conflagration and the end of the world. In the predictions of the Bible we find these great events all culminating and clustering together. Before they take place, there is to be a long period of rest and peace to the church on earth, during which Satan is to be bound, and his malign influence upon mankind restrained. At the close of this period the destroyer is to be loosed for a little season, and vice and wickedness are again to prevail. But in the midst of this last triumph of the ungodly, while they are coming up upon the breadth of the earth as the sand of the sea, and compassing the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; suddenly, unexpectedly, the archangel's trump will sound, and the scenes of the last judgment will burst upon the world. (See Rev. 20.)

3. The final Judge. Respecting the personage who is to be Judge on this great occasion, the Scriptures leave us no room for doubt. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John v. 22). "Who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and kingdom" (2 Tim. iv. 1). "The Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and then shall he sit on the throne of his glory" (Matt. xxv. 31). The judging of the world is represented as the last mediatorial work of the Saviour. When that is finished, and the final awards are pronounced and executed, then will he deliver up his mediatorial kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 24–28).

4. The beings judged. The beings to be judged in the last great day are, first, the whole human family, the righteous and the wicked,—all who have lived on this earth from its creation to its end. "Before him shall be gathered all nations." "Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God."

We may also expect that the angels will be called to the judgment with us. Of the fallen angels, it is expressly said, that

they "are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). Respecting the judgment of the holy angels, we are not so explicitly informed. But from the fact that they were once upon trial, and that, as ministering spirits, they are deeply concerned with us in our trial, the conclusion is not unreasonable that they will appear with us in the judgment at the last day. In the Bible we have no account of any other intelligent creatures, except angels and men.

5. For what are we to be judged? The question has been asked, whether men are to be called into judgment, at the last day, for their whole character up to that period, or only for their characters while on probation. The latter supposition we think the more reasonable and scriptural. Probation and judgment are connected ideas. Men are now on probation for the judgment. They are here forming characters for the judgment of the last day. The presumption, therefore, is that they will be called into judgment only for the characters formed and sustained by them during the period of their trial.

If we are to be called to an account for character sustained subsequent to the termination of our trial, then why not for character sustained subsequent to the day of judgment? And must we not suppose, on this ground, that there will be successive days of judgment, following each other at intervals to all eternity?

But the Scriptures have decided this question for us. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10). It is, then, for "the things done in the body,"—done by us while on probation here,—that we are to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and render an impartial account.

6. Duration of the judgment. Respecting the duration of the judgment scene, different opinions have been entertained, and the Scriptures afford us no positive information. We are told, indeed, of the day of judgment; but whether a literal day is intended, or a much longer period, it is impossible to decide. The process of judgment will continue long enough to answer

all the purposes for which it was instituted; but I see no necessity for supposing that it will continue for a very long period,—perhaps not longer than a literal day. At the sound of the last trump the dead are to be raised, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." In a very little time the thrones can be set, and the books opened, and the worlds assembled before their final Judge. An unerring separation can soon be made. And by some mysterious process, there may be such a general unfolding and exhibition of character, that "every work shall be brought into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." We know not, at present, how such an exhibition of character is to be made; but who will say that it cannot be made, and made suddenly; so that the whole process of the judgment may pass away in comparatively a little time?

7. The object of the judgment. The final judgment must have been appointed for some great and important object,—an object worthy of the vastness and grandeur of the scene. This object was not, certainly, to satisfy God how his creatures had acted; or to satisfy them, individually, as to their own character and state: for God will learn nothing new respecting his creatures, in the light of the judgment; and each one of them may be as well satisfied as to his own character and state before the judgment as afterwards. The grand object of the judgment must be something vastly higher than all this. It is, probably, to afford to the Divine Being an opportunity to vindicate his own character before the universe; to show to each and every one of his creatures that he has done right,—in respect not only to that one, but to all the rest. In the judgment, God will show to me that he has treated all my fellow-creatures right; and to all my fellow-creatures that he has treated me right. He will show to each individual of the countless myriads who surround his throne, that he has treated, not only themselves, but all the others right; so that when the separation is made, and the sentences pronounced, every mouth may be stopped and every conscience convinced that the award is, in every instance, right. We have here the grand object of the general judgment; the purpose to be answered by it; the reason why God has deter-

mined, at some period yet future, to bring his intelligent creatures, friends and enemies, together, and try and judge them in the presence of each other. And certainly this is a most noble object,—one altogether worthy of the grandeur and glory of the final day.

8. The issues of the judgment. These are clearly set before us in the Scriptures. One portion of our lost race will be acquitted and blessed, and caught away to mansions prepared for them before the foundation of the world; while the other portion will be condemned and accursed, and driven away "into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And from that period forward there will be no more changes. "He that is unjust will be unjust still; and he that is filthy will be filthy still; and he that is holy will be holy still" (Rev. xxii. 11).

And thus the grand drama of this world's history will be closed. Heaven will gather into its capacious bosom all that is holy and lovely from the earth,—all that is meet for that blest abode; and hell will receive to its flaming prisons those only that are degraded, polluted, and vicious,—on whose souls are found the stains of unforsaken, uncleansed, unpardoned guilt. "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie."

At this decisive period, this earth, having answered the purpose for which it was made, will be burned up; and the great Redeemer, having gathered in his own elect, and put all enemies under his feet, and finished the work which was given him to do, will lay aside his mediatorial character, and "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father."

LECTURE LIV.

FINAL STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED.

At the close of the last judgment, the righteous are invited to take possession of "the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world." They are said to go away "into life eternal" (Matt. xxv. 34, 46). The final abode of the righteous is, in Scripture, denominated heaven; and it has been made a question whether heaven is literally a place to which the righteous go, or merely a state of being upon which they enter.

My own opinion is, that heaven is a place. I know of no reason why it should not be so considered. If the heavenly beings are pure spirits, it is certain that spirits may be located, or fixed to some particular place. Our spirits are now united to our bodies, and confined to the present world. What absurdity, then, in supposing that other spirits are confined to some other place, in another world?

But the righteous, after the judgment, will not be pure spirits. They will have bodies as well as souls; and from the very nature of the body, it is certain, not only that it may be located, but that it must be. The abode of the raised, glorified body, must be a place. Accordingly, our Saviour said to his disciples, when about to leave them, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John xiv. 2). And heaven is uniformly spoken of in the Scriptures as a place. It is "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." It is a "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." It is a "kingdom prepared for God's people from the foundation of the world."

The enjoyments of heaven are adapted to the holy natures of the glorified beings who dwell there. They are not, in the proper sense of the term, sensual; though, subsequent to the

resurrection, they will be, to some extent, corporeal. Every sense and organ of the raised body will be a source, an inlet, of celestial glory. The happiness of heaven will consist partly in the absence of everything calculated to disquiet and afflict the soul. There the righteous are said to "rest from their labors." They rest from all temptation and conflict, toil and fatigue, sin and sorrow. They rest from all sickness and pain, and from every variety of evil which besets them in the present life. "They hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun smite them, nor any heat;" and "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

But the happiness of heaven is not a mere negation,—the absence of everything calculated to afflict the soul. The enjoyments of that world are also positive. They are in part intellectual; arising from the exercise of the understanding, and the discovery of truth. They are in part moral; arising from the exercise and approbation of conscience. But they are chiefly spiritual,—the satisfaction of the heart,—growing out of the love of God, and flowing from the most intimate communion with him. It is emphatically true of heavenly beings, that they rejoice in God,—in his perfections, his character, his government, and his glory. They rejoice in Christ,—in his person and character, in his finished work of redeeming mercy, and in the stability and triumph of his holy kingdom. They rejoice in one another,—in their society, their fellowship, their employments, and their prospects. Indeed, every capacity of their souls will be filled with joy; and, as these capacities enlarge, they will continue to be filled; and thus will their course be onward and upward forever.

At the close of the judgment, the wicked are represented as "going away into everlasting punishment." They are to "depart accursed into everlasting fire" (Matt. xxv. 41, 46). The abode of the wicked in the other world is, in Scripture, denominated hell. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God" (Ps. ix 17).

The same considerations which have been urged to show that heaven is a place are in point also to prove that hell is a place. It may be a place previous to the resurrection; but subsequent

to that event it would seem it must be. The body, raised "to shame and everlasting contempt," will need a place in which to be imprisoned and to suffer. Accordingly hell is everywhere spoken of in the Scriptures as a place. It is "the bottomless pit," "the lake of fire," the place "prepared for the devil and his angels." Of Judas it is said, when he had hanged himself, that he went "to his own place" (Acts i. 25).

The miseries of the wicked, previous to the resurrection, must be purely spiritual; but, after that event, they will be, in part, corporeal. They will consist in the loss, the absence, of everything desirable, and in the infliction of positive, unmingled, sufferings. The rich man in hell is said to have received his good things; implying that no more good remained for him. Accordingly, he was denied a drop of water to cool his burning tongue. The wicked in hell are said to "have no rest, day nor night." "The wine of the wrath of God is poured out without mixture into their cup" (Rev. xiv. 10). They will endure the tortures of an ever-accusing, stinging conscience. They will suffer from the indulgence of unsated malice, envy, revenge, rage, and every other hateful passion of which they are capable. They will suffer from perpetual disappointment, defeat, and despair. They will suffer from one another. They will suffer all that is implied in those awful figures, those appalling representations, by which the Holy Spirit has set forth their agonies.

But will their sufferings endure forever? Will not these miserable beings, at some period, be released? Most gladly would we indulge the hope of their release, if this hope were justified by reason and the word of God; but we are constrained to think that it is justified by neither.

In urging arguments against the restoration of the finally lost, I shall be under the necessity of repeating some things which were said in a previous Lecture.[1] My apology is to be found, in the great importance of the subject, and the necessity of treating it fairly and fully.

1. Let it be considered, first of all, whether hell is a fit place for the conversion and reformation of those who are plunged into it. It is the world of miserable spirits,—the place "pre-

[1] Lecture L: Death.

pared for the devil and his angels." It is a place from which all good beings and good influences are forever excluded, and where the wicked are given over to the unrestrained indulgence of whatever is base and sinful. They go on and go down, sinning and suffering, pouring forth their malice against God, and against one another,—biting and gnawing their tongues for pain, and yet not repenting of their evil deeds (Rev. xvi. 10). And now, we ask, what is there in such a place at all calculated to improve the characters or the condition of the miserable beings there immured? What is there to indicate that that world was fitted up as a house of correction, designed for the reformation of its guilty inhabitants? Let any person consider, seriously, what kind of place hell is,—consider its society, its example, and the influence there exerted by one being upon another,—and see if he can persuade himself that the wicked are likely, in that world, to be won over to the love and practice of the truth, and to be prepared for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Perhaps some may think that the sufferings of hell will alone be sufficient to subdue the offenders, and bring them to repentance. But let such persons remember that mere unsanctified suffering has no tendency to subdue the obdurate heart. So far from this, its tendency is to harden, to exasperate, to provoke the impenitent mind to greater wickedness. Such was the effect which it had upon the heart of Pharaoh; upon the heart of Saul, the first king of Israel; and upon the heart of Ahaz, one of the kings of Judah. "In his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord: this is that King Ahaz" (2 Chron. xxviii. 22). Unsanctified suffering always has this effect upon the human heart, and always will have, whether in this world or the next. "Though thou shouldest bray a fool with a pestle in a mortar, yet will not his foolishness depart from him" (Prov. xxvii. 22).

2. The wicked cannot be released after the judgment (and it is with reference to their state after the judgment that we now inquire) for two reasons. In the first place, there will then be no mediator. Christ is now on his mediatorial throne, and is carrying forward his purposes of grace in respect to this world.

And this order of things will continue until the dead are raised, the worlds are judged, and the awards of the judgment are executed. And then cometh the end of the mediatorial kingdom. When all Christ's enemies are put under his feet, and all his purposes, both of grace and of justice, are accomplished, "then shall he deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28). From that period onward there will be no possibility of the salvation of sinners, for the very good reason that there will be no mediator.

The same truth is further evident, since, after the judgment, there will be no probation. This has been fully proved, in our Lecture upon Death; and the proof need not be repeated here. The consideration, that after the judgment there will be no probation, is decisive as to the destiny of those who are then condemned.

3. It is essential to the doctrine of universal restoration to suppose all punishment disciplinary, designed merely to promote the good of the sufferer,—which is absurd. If the sufferings of the other world are all designed and calculated to promote the good of those who bear them, then these sufferings are no evidence of God's permanent displeasure, but the contrary. They are the chastisements of a merciful Father; and "whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." On this ground, too, it would be, not a blessing, but the contrary, to be delivered from these sufferings, at least until they had accomplished their end;—just as it is an injury to the refractory child to be delivered from that degree of punishment which is designed and calculated to promote his good.

But we know that all punishment is not disciplinary; neither among men, nor under the government of God. Capital punishments, in this world, are not disciplinary, but exemplary. The murderer is not hanged for his own good, but as an example, for the good of society. God is often said in the Scriptures to take vengeance on his enemies,—a mode of expression which proves that what he inflicts, in such cases, is not disciplinary, but vindicative, exemplary. It is said of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, that they "are set forth for an exam-

ple, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7). Here, certainly, is an instance of exemplary punishment.

4. It is an acknowledged part of the doctrine of restoration, that every one suffers, sooner or later, all that he deserves. "We deserve no more suffering than that which is best calculated to promote our good; and this every one is sure to receive." But what says the Bible, as to the proper wages and desert of sin? "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life" (Rom. vi. 23). The wages of sin are here represented to be a death which stands in immediate contrast with eternal life. Consequently, they are eternal death.

On this ground, too, salvation is impossible. There is no salvation in being delivered from what we deserve, if we deserve only that degree of suffering which is best calculated to promote our good. To be delivered from this would be, not a salvation, but an injury. And, certainly, there is no salvation in being delivered from what we do not deserve. For, under the government of a righteous God, no one is, or ever was, exposed to endure undeserved miseries.

Again; the Scriptures represent that all who are saved are saved by grace,—saved by Christ,—are forgiven, justified, etc.

But what grace in delivering those from further miseries, who have endured all that they deserve? And how do such persons need the interposition of Christ? What can Christ do for them? They have suffered all they deserve, and have nothing more to endure or fear. And what have such persons to be forgiven? They have suffered the whole penalty of the law, paid their whole debt, and what is there left to be forgiven? These remarks are sufficient to show that this doctrine of universal restoration is abhorrent to the whole system of gospel grace.

5. This system is contradicted by numerous and various representations of the Bible. The Scriptures speak of some who are never to be forgiven, and consequently never to be saved. "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matt. xii. 32).

The Scriptures speak of those who have received their portion of good in this life, and consequently have nothing to hope for beyond the grave. "Son, remember, that thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst thy good things" (Luke xii. 25). "Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation" (Luke vi. 4).

The wicked generally hope for everlasting happiness in heaven; but we are told in the Bible that their "hope shall perish;" that it "shall be cut off;" that "it shall be as the giving up of the ghost" (Job viii. 13; xi. 29). How, then, are they to be made forever happy?

It is said of some that their "end is destruction;" that their "end is to be burned;" that they shall "suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Phil. iii. 19; Heb. vi. 8; Prov. xxix. 1). It will be seen, at a glance, that all such representations are in palpable contradiction to the idea of a final and universal restoration of the wicked.

God says of the wicked, that when "their fear cometh as desolation, and their destruction as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon them; then they shall call, but he will not answer; they shall seek him early, but they shall not find him" (Prov. i. 27, 28). How is this passage consistent with the idea that sinners will be heard and answered in the world below, and restored to everlasting happiness?

It it said of those who were bidden to the gospel feast, and would not come, "They shall not taste of my supper"—they never shall (Luke xiv. 24).

"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life,"—never shall,—"but the wrath of God abideth on him;"—a sufficient proof, of itself, of the endless endurance of future miseries (John iii. 36).

Christ said to his enemies, at a certain time, "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me, and where I am" (that is in heaven) "thither ye cannot come" (John vii. 34).

Of the traitor Judas, Christ said, "Good were it for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. xxvi. 24). This declaration is entirely inconsistent with the restoration of Judas to the everlasting favor and enjoyment of God.

The rich man in hell was plainly told that betwixt him and heaven there was a great gulf fixed, so that those who would pass from one world to the other, could not (Luke xvi. 26). Has this great gulf ever been bridged over, or will it be?

How often did our Saviour threaten his enemies with "the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched"! (Mark ix. 43, 44.) And how often it is said of the wicked, in the Book of God, that they "shall be cast into everlasting fire;" that they "shall go away into everlasting punishment;" that they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power!" (Matt. xxv. 41, 46; 2 Thess. i. 9.)

I know it will be said, that the word rendered everlasting is sometimes used to signify a limited duration. To this I reply,—

(1.) That the Greek words αιων and αιωνιος literally and properly denote an endless duration. Their etymology (αει and ων being or existing always) shows this. Their ordinary use and signification show the same. They as properly denote an endless duration as our English words eternal and everlasting. They are sometimes used, like the English words, in a restricted sense,—restricted by the nature of the subject to which they are applied; but in such cases the connection readily indicates the sense, so that there is little danger of error. But,

(2.) We are not left to the general meaning of these words, however satisfactory that may be. The word αιωνιος is so used by our Saviour, in reference to the future punishment of the wicked, as to show, conclusively, that it must denote an endless duration. I refer particularly to the passage (Matt. xxv. 46) where the future punishment of the wicked, and the future happiness of the righteous are set over one against the other, and the same term αιωνιος is applied to both; thus indicating that the duration of both is equal and endless.

(3.) But we are not left even to this conclusive consideration. There is a combination of the Greek words (εις τους αιωνας τον αιωνων) in frequent use in the New Testament, which invariably denotes an endless duration. This phrase is used more than twenty times in the New Testament, and always in the

same sense. It is used fourteen times in the Apocalypse, and always in the same sense. Now this peculiar phraseology is used repeatedly in the New Testament, and in the Apocalypse, to set forth the duration of the future punishment of the lost. They "shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever." "And again they said, Alleluia, and her smoke rose up forever and ever" (Rev. xiv. 11; xix. 3; xx. 10). Really, if this does not decide the question as to the endless punishment of the wicked, then words cannot decide it. Here is a phraseology, which the writers of the New Testament have used more than twenty times, and the writer of a single book fourteen times, and always (unless it be in the cases referred to) to denote an endless duration; and yet by these decisive, unambiguous words, the same writers have repeatedly set forth the duration of the future miseries of the lost.

A consideration of the common objections to eternal punishment, together with some concluding remarks, must be deferred to another Lecture.

LECTURE LV.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

1. It is objected to the doctrine of eternal punishment, that it is inconsistent with the perfections of God; in particular, with his infinite wisdom, goodness, and power. These perfections, it is insisted, must lead the Supreme Being to do the best for his creatures,—for each and every one of them,—that can possibly be done;—must lead him to make all his creatures as holy and as happy as they are capable of being, to all eternity. But is this conclusion justified? Is it consistent with plain matters of fact? Take, for example, the case of the fallen angels. Has God determined that they shall possess as great an amount of holiness and happiness as they are capable of, to all eternity? Why then their fall, more than six thousand years ago, and all the miseries which they have since endured? Why are they still "reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day?" And in the issue of the judgment, why are they to be driven away into the "everlasting fire," which has been prepared to receive them? (Jude 6; Matt. xxv. 41.)

Will it be said that everlasting here means a long but limited period, after which the fallen angels will be restored, and be more than compensated for all their sufferings by an eternity of happiness? Without entering again upon a consideration of the meaning of the word everlasting, I would ask, to what degree of holiness and happiness are the fallen angels to be restored? Certainly not to an infinite degree, unless they are to be made equal to the Supreme Being. And if the degree of their holiness and happiness is to be finite, I would ask, again, could not God have raised them to any finite degree of holiness and happiness, without the dreadful necessity of their fall, and their

long-continued period of suffering and of sin? Could he not have raised them to as high degrees of holiness and happiness, without the intervention of their fall, as with it? And hence, is not all the sin and the misery of their long period of apostasy a dead loss to them? And how are we to account for it, on the Universalist theory, as to the promptings of the divine perfections?

Will it be said, that the long period of sin and suffering through which the devils will have passed, at the time of their recovery, will have enlarged their capacities, and qualified them for higher degrees of holiness and happiness than they could otherwise have enjoyed? But how enlarged their capacities? Are sin and misery of such an enlarging and improving character? Or do they not rather tend to darken the understanding, to harden the heart, and impair and weaken all the powers of the soul? And, on this account, must not the devils, if restored at all, be restored with vastly feebler capacities than they might have possessed, if they had not sinned? At any rate, must not their long period of sin and suffering be regarded as a needless waste to them, and altogether unaccountable, on the theory of the Universalist, as to the promptings of the divine perfections?

I have taken the case of the fallen angels to show the inconsistency of the Universalist theory with plain matters of fact; but the same reasoning will apply as well to the case of any other sinners. Here is a man who has sinned and suffered but one hour; and how are we to reconcile his case with the theory under consideration? If God is bound, by his perfections, to give to each of his intelligent creatures, in the progress of its existence, the utmost amount of holiness and happiness of which it is capable; what are we to think of his treatment of this man? He certainly could have kept him, and saved him from this hour of sin and suffering; and why did he not do it? Will it be said, again, that God means to compensate him, for this hour's sin and suffering, by an overbalancing amount of future good? But what is to be the degree of his enjoyment in future? Not infinite, certainly; and if finite, could not God have con-

ferred any finite degree of enjoyment, without the necessity of a fall?

The facts of God's dispensations are stubborn things; and the general current of them, which have come to our knowledge, is utterly inconsistent with the idea that the perfections of the Creator bind or prompt him to give to each individual of his intelligent creation the utmost amount of holiness and happiness of which such individual is capable forever. Whatever else may be true, we know that this cannot be; because it is contradicted by plain matters of fact.

Will it be asked, then, What are the promptings of infinite wisdom and goodness? What must these adorable perfections dispose and lead the Supreme Being to do? These are great questions, which it hardly becomes the creatures of yesterday to answer. And yet, guided by the Word and Spirit of God, I think we may safely say, that his perfections will prompt him to glorify himself, in the highest possible degree, by advancing, to the utmost, the good of the intelligent universe, as a whole. Perhaps some may think that this view is substantially the same as the other. But it is not so. The greatest good of a community, as a whole, may not involve or require the greatest good of every individual composing that whole. This is true, often, in regard to communities in this world. It may be true in regard to the vast community of the universe. Indeed, we have as much reason to suppose that it is true, as we have to suppose that God is infinitely wise and good, and that he is intending to glorify himself, in promoting the highest good of the universe. For we know that he has not determined to promote the highest possible good of every individual in the universe. This we learn, not only from his Word, but from facts actually occurring before our eyes. We infer, therefore, assuredly, that the highest good of the universe, as a whole, which, it would seem, the infinite perfections of the Supreme Being must lead him to accomplish, does not involve the highest possible good of every individual composing that whole. God may do all that his infinite perfections prompt him to do; he may secure the highest good of the universe, as a whole, and yet individuals be left to suffer, more or less, for a longer or shorter period,

temporarily or eternally, as the demands of justice and the greatest good of the whole shall require.

The difficulty on this subject (if there be any) lies not in the eternal existence of sin and misery, but in their existence at all. Reasoning, *à priori*, from the divine wisdom and goodness, without any reference to existing facts, we might infer, perhaps we should think conclusively, that there could be no sin, or evil of any kind, under the government of God. For, surely, an infinitely good being cannot be pleased with evil, and, possessed of infinite wisdom and power, he is able to exclude it forever from his dominions. Having drawn this seemingly incontestable inference, we open our eyes upon the world, and we find it a field of blood and a vale of tears. We see the whole world lying in wickedness,—"groaning and travailing in pain together until now." And now what are we to think? Has God ceased to reign? Or has he ceased to be infinitely wise and good? Or have our metaphysics misled us? Have we mistaken the promptings and operations of the divine perfections? We see now that God is not consulting for the highest possible good of each individual of his creatures. Facts forbid this supposition. But may he not be consulting for the highest good of the universe as a whole? And may not the highest good of the whole, as a whole, be perfectly consistent with, and even require, all the evils that we see existing around us? And if the highest good of the whole may be consistent with, and require the existence of evil temporarily, may it not require the same eternally? And in this view, who but the Supreme Being can decide—a point which he has decided affirmatively in his word—whether his infinite perfections, his highest glory, and the highest good of the intelligent universe, as a whole, may not be more than consistent with—may not require—the everlasting sin and misery of a part of his intelligent creation;—providing always that no injustice shall be done; that none shall have occasion to feel or to say that they have been treated worse than they deserve?

And now, when the Universalist asks, "How can you reconcile the everlasting sin and misery of a part of God's intelligent creation with his infinite wisdom and goodness?" I answer:

Just as well as you can reconcile the sin and misery which actually exist, and which you believe will exist for a long time to come, with God's infinite wisdom and goodness;—and a great deal better. For, on the principles which you adopt as to the promptings of the divine perfections, you cannot account at all for the sin and misery which you know exist. But on the principles which I adopt, I can account for the existence of sin and misery temporarily and eternally. And if you renounce your principles, and adopt mine, you can just as well account for the eternal existence of sin and suffering, as for their existence in the present life.

2. It has been further objected, that eternal punishment is inconsistent with the justice of God. "The sin of a finite being cannot be an infinite evil, nor can it deserve eternal punishment." I have no partiality for the phrase infinite evil of sin. It is one which I seldom use; though I should have no objection to using it with proper explanations. When an individual commits sin, he perpetrates the greatest evil,—he does the greatest wrong to God and the universe, of which he is capable. This is, perhaps, all that is meant, when it is said that he is chargeable with an infinite evil. And having committed the greatest evil of which, in his circumstances, he is capable, he may be said to deserve the greatest punishment of which he is capable;—a punishment varying in degree according to circumstances, but of endless duration.

We come to the same conclusion, looking at the subject in another light. The evil of an offence rises in magnitude, in proportion to the dignity of the being against whom it is committed. Thus to spit upon a worm would be a very slight offence. To spit contemptuously on an animal of great beauty and value would be a more considerable offence. To spit upon a man would be a still greater offence. To spit in the face of one's father, or of a king, would be dreadful. The offence rises in degree, at every step, just in proportion to the dignity and worth of the being against whom it is committed. What, then, shall be said as to the enormity of an offence, committed (as all sin is) directly against God, and against all the interests of the

universe? Is it an abuse of terms, to speak of sin in this view, as an infinite evil, and as deserving an endless punishment?

Nor must we forget, in this connection, the cross of Christ. How appalling must that evil be which brought the Son of God to the cross, and for which nothing less than his precious blood could atone? Is it an abuse of terms, I ask again, to speak of sin, in this view, as an infinite evil?

After all, we can get but a faint conception of the evil and ill-desert of sin in the present life! In respect to this subject, as well as many others, we see now through a glass darkly. And yet we may see enough, even here, to satisfy us that the penalty of God's law is a just penalty, and that the proper wages and desert of sin are eternal death. Every truly convicted sinner is satisfied of this. Every person must be satisfied of it before he can offer up the publican's prayer, or accept of that mercy which is offered in the gospel. Those, therefore, who are not satisfied on this point,—who are disposed to cavil at the justice of God's threatenings,—reveal a fearful secret in regard to their own minds and hearts. Instead of refuting God's justice, they unmask themselves, and show that they have never yet come to a right understanding of their own characters and deserts in the sight of God.

3. Numerous passages of Scripture have been relied on to disprove the doctrine of eternal punishment. In presenting and considering these Scriptures, it will be necessary, so far as possible, to classify them.

(1.) A class of passages has been quoted, which merely prove the universality of Christ's atonement, and the extent of the provisions and offers of the gospel. "Who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6). He "tasteth death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9). "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved" (John iii. 17). There can be no doubt that the atonement of Christ is sufficient for all men. He "tasteth death for every man." He has expiated, and in this sense "taken away, the sin of the world." He has made a provision, has laid a foundation, on the ground of which the world

may be saved. But will all men accept of this provision? Will all build on this foundation? Will all embrace the free and universal offers of life? If not, what good will the atonement, the provisions of the gospel, the offers of life do them? Better had it been for them, in this case, if Christ had never died.

(2.) Other Scriptures have been quoted, in proof of universal salvation, which merely express the universal benevolence of God, and his desires that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth. "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9). "Who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4). The will and pleasure of God, as the terms are here used, signify his desires, his wishes, and not his unchangeable purposes. In the sense in which God wills not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, he wills that there should be no sin and suffering in the universe. He has no pleasure in sin and suffering. Separately considered, he does not desire them. Yet, all things considered, it has entered into his great plan of providence that these evils should exist. So the final destruction of the wicked may have entered into his universal plan; although, in itself, he can have no pleasure in it.

(3.) Other passages are quoted in proof of universal salvation which merely express God's universal providential care of men in the present life. They do not relate to the future world at all. "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Ps. cxlv. 9). "The Lord will not cast off forever, but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion; for he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men" (Lam. iii. 31–33). "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour" (temporal preserver, deliverer[1]) "of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10).

(4.) Other Scriptures are quoted, which express God's readiness to forgive his wandering people, and restore them to his favor, on repentance. "The Lord is merciful and gracious,

[1] See Whitby, Bloomfield, Scott, etc.

slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger forever" (Ps. ciii. 8, 9). "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep mine anger forever" (Jer. iii. 12). "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place; with him, also, that is of a humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made" (Is. lvii. 15, 16). In these and the like passages, there is nothing to favor Universalism, unless it be the sound of words. The moment they are examined in their connection, they are seen to have no relation to the subject.

(5.) In a multitude of passages, God has predicted and promised a coming day, when the gospel shall prevail all over the earth, and the nations shall all be blessed in the Saviour. Upon some of these passages Universalists have seized, and forced them, against their obvious meaning, into the work of proving universal salvation. "In thee (Abraham) shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3). "All the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee" (Ps. xxii. 27). "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Is. xl. 5).[1] "There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him" (Dan. vii. 14). "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." I will open a way in which all men may come, and will usher in a period in which all will come,—when the earth shall be full of the knowledge and love of God. (John xii. 32.)

Near akin to these passages are those which speak of the restoration of the Jews; some of which have also been pressed into the service of Universalism. "Blindness, in part, is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved." When the fulness of the Gentiles is

[1] This passage is quoted, with some variation, in Luke iii. 6.

brought in, the Jews shall be converted with them (Rom. xi. 26). In a passage in Ezekiel, where the conversion of Jews and Gentiles is promised, the Gentiles are spoken of under the similitude of two wicked sisters, Sodom and Samaria. "When thy sisters Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return unto their former estate, then shalt thou and thy daughters return unto your former estate" (Ezek. xvi. 55). The concluding verses of this chapter show plainly that the restoration here spoken of is to be accomplished in this life,—in the latter-day glory of the church on earth,—when Jews and Gentiles shall rejoice together in the hopes and privileges of the gospel.

(6.) Other passages are quoted, in proof of universal salvation, which relate simply to the universal resurrection of the dead. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plague! O grave, I will be thy destruction!" (Hos. xiii. 14.) "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 20). As temporal death came by Adam, so the resurrection will be by Christ. And yet some will be raised "to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2).

(7.) Other Scriptures are quoted to prove universal salvation, which it is plain, from the connection, relate to the general judgment; at which period, we know, the wicked will not be restored, but will be driven away from the judgment into everlasting fire. "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ: for it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 11). This passage is taken from Is. xlv. 23. It is quoted again by Paul, in Phil. ii. 9. It relates, we know, to the final judgment, when all shall do homage to Christ. But with the wicked it will be the homage of constraint and fear, and not of the heart.

"He shall send Jesus Christ" (that is, to judgment) "whom the heavens must receive until the time of the restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21). The restitution here spoken of, what-

ever it may be, is to take place at the second coming of Christ. Of course, it cannot be a restoration of all men to the love and favor of God; since one part of the object for which Christ will then appear will be to sentence and consign the wicked to the regions of despair.

(8.) Other passages have been quoted, which express the purpose of God ultimately to restore the broken order of the universe, and bring all things, through Christ, harmoniously to conspire for the advancement of his own glory. He will "gather together all things in one" (Eph. i. 10). He will "reconile all things to himself" (Col. i. 20). But all things may be gathered together in one, in the sense of the apostle, and be made harmoniously to conspire for the advancement of the divine glory, and yet the incorrigible enemies of God be punished, as they deserve, to all eternity.

(9.) There are two or three passages, which come not under either of the above classes, and on which it will be necessary to remark. The first is that in 1 Pet. iii. 19, where Christ is said to have preached to the spirits in prison. This preaching he is thought to have performed by the descent of his soul into hell during the interment of his body; thus indicating that there is ground of hope even for the spirits of the lost. But the whole passage decides expressly (as was shown in a previous Lecture) that this preaching was not performed by Christ in person, but by his spirit. It further decides, that it was not performed while the Saviour's body lay in the tomb, but "while the long suffering of God waited, in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." Then Christ, by his spirit, assisting and strengthening Noah and the other patriarchs, preached to the antediluvian sinners,—who refused to listen to the warnings given them, died in their sins, and went to hell; and in the days of the Apostle Peter they were imprisoned spirits in the world of despair.

The next passage is in Rom. v. 12–20, where an analogy is drawn between Adam and Christ, and it is represented that, as the former introduced sin into the world, and brought all men under a sentence of death, so the latter has opened a way of life, and brought all men into a state in which they may be justified

and saved. The passage is too long to be quoted and critically commented on here. A few points, however, are very obvious. As, first, the great calamity introduced by Adam is called death; and the corresponding benefit introduced by Christ is the justification of life; and these must be understood as standing in contrast, one over against the other. What, then, was the death introduced by Adam? Was it merely temporal death? Then the opposite benefit is the resurrection of the body,—which may be accomplished, as before shown, and yet, some be raised "to shame and everlasting contempt." But the death introduced by Adam was something more than mere temporal death. It was eternal death. Adam did not, indeed, actually involve his whole race in eternal death, but he exposed them to it; he brought them under sentence of eternal condemnation. In contrast with this, the second Adam does not actually bring all men into the possession of eternal life; but he puts them in the way of it; he sets it before them, and urges it upon them as an attainable good. This is the first part of the contrast. The second is equally striking and instructive. As those who follow the first Adam in point of character, become actual sinners, and, persisting in sin, go down to eternal death; so those who follow the second Adam in point of character, become holy, and continue faithful unto the end, shall receive the opposite benefit,—the justification of life. Or, to adopt the precise language of the apostle, those "who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

Such I conceive to be the proper meaning of this disputed passage, so far as it bears on the subject before us; and, certainly, it goes not a step towards teaching or favoring the doctrine of universal salvation.

There is but another passage on which I think it necessary to remark, and that may be found in Revelation v. 13: "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." In order to understand this passage, it is only necessary to observe, that the vision here

recorded is not a prophecy of what is to take place in the coming ages. It does not belong to the prophetical part of the Revelation, which commences with the opening of the seals in the sixth chapter. But the heavens were opened to the beloved disciple, and he informs us of what he saw then actually taking place in heaven. He saw the throne of God; and in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain; and he heard the worship of the living creatures, the elders, and the holy angels. Nor was this all. He heard every creature that was in heaven, —even those whose bodies were mouldering upon the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea,—he heard all the spirits of the just made perfect, wherever their bodies were entombed, uniting with the angelic choir, and singing, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."

I will not dwell longer on the proof-texts of Universalists. It is proof enough of the falseness of their system, that they are under the necessity of suborning such a mass of Scripture testimony, and turning it aside from its natural and proper signification, in order to afford to their doctrine so much as the semblance of support.

4. It is thought by many, who abandon the idea of a universal restoration, that there is hope at least for the heathen, who die in their sins. But what is the testimony of Scripture in regard to the future state and prospects of the heathen? It is of the heathen, especially, that the Psalmist says: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. ix. 17). "Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name" (Ps. lxxix. 6). The prophecies of Obadiah and Nahum are continued denunciations of God's wrath upon the heathen. By Micah, God says: "I will execute vengeance, in anger and in fury, upon the heathen, such as they have not heard" (Chap. v. 15). Indeed, to die as the heathen, and lie down with the uncircumcised, was equivalent, in the mind of a Jew, to an endless perdition. (See Ezek. xxxii. 19–32.)

The Apostle Paul, having mentioned the degraded and vicious practices of the heathen, adds: "They which commit such

things are worthy of death;" and "The end of these things is death;" meaning, in both instances, as the connection shows, "eternal death" (Rom. i. 32; vi. 21). Again he says: God will render "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil: to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile," or heathen (Rom. ii. 9). Again, writing to those who had been heathens, and describing the vicious practices of the heathen, Paul says, in repeated instances, that such "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." They shall have no "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."[1] In short, the whole missionary life of Paul is a practical illustration of his belief on this subject. He would never have labored and suffered as he did for the salvation of the heathen, had he not regarded them as in a lost state without the gospel, exposed to eternal death.

The argument respecting the future state of the heathen may be stated in few words.

(1.) There can be no doubt that they are sinners. They have broken the law of God,—that law which is written on the heart of every human being.

(2.) Having broken the law of God, they are exposed to its penalty, which is eternal death.

(3.) This penalty they must suffer, unless they are forgiven.

(4.) They cannot be forgiven unless they repent.

(5.) With few exceptions, here and there, they give no evidence of repentance, but the most painful evidence to the contrary.

(6.) The conclusion, therefore, is irresistible, that the great body of the heathen, throughout the world, live and die in sin, and perish forever. The degree of their punishment, indeed, is not to be compared with that of those who perish from under the light of the gospel. They who know not their Lord's will, and commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes (Luke xii. 48). Still, they must be beaten. They will be punished in measure, as they deserve; but for aught that Scripture or reason teaches to the contrary, their punishment will be eternal.

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 10; Gal. v. 21; Eph. v. 5.

The doctrine of universal salvation, is unknown, so far as appears, in the heathen world. The heathen do not expect it. The light of nature and reason does not teach it.

This doctrine was unknown, too, in the ancient Jewish and Christian world. The Jews had no thought of it; and in the Christian church, during the first two centuries, it was neither advocated nor opposed.

A species of restorationism was taught by Clement, and Origen, and others of the Alexandrian School, about the beginning of the third century; but the church soon discovered and discarded the error. From this period, we hear almost nothing of Universalism, in any form, until after the reformation from Popery.

It is a remarkable fact, that many of those who deny the doctrine of eternal punishment have no doubt that this doctrine is taught in the Bible. This is true of most modern infidels. It is also true of the Rationalists of Germany, who are no better than infidels. They have no doubt that the Bible teaches the doctrine of endless punishment; though they feel under no obligations, on this account, to believe it. And the same may be said of most American Unitarians. These hope for a final and universal restoration, but found their hopes on their philosophy, and not on the Bible. The Bible, they admit, holds out no hope for the dying sinner. It leaves him in darkness. It reveals no deliverance for him beyond the grave. Still, the doctrine of eternal punishment is too dreadful to be believed, and they hope it is not true.

Facts such as these are very convincing, as to the real doctrine of the Scriptures. The language of Scripture is so plain and decisive as to constrain men, in opposition to all their predilections, to admit that it does inculcate the doctrine of eternal punishment.

Indeed, the language of the Bible, on this subject, is as plain and as strong, as that of almost any other book or writing in the world. It is as strong as the language of these Lectures. And by the same glosses and interpretations with which the Bible is made to teach the doctrine of universal salvation, my Lectures may be made to teach the same. I have spoken freely, to be

sure, of the unquenchable and everlasting fire, and of eternal punishment; and the sacred writers do the same. And if, in their lips, it means universal salvation, why should it not mean the same in mine? Why should not these Lectures be accepted as sound Universalism by those who insist on the Universalism of the Bible?

I may go even further and ask, How, in consistency with such modes of interpretation,—how is it possible to teach, in words, any other than universal salvation? In what way shall words be put together, so as to teach, on these principles, a proper, endless punishment?

LECTURE LVI.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF UNIVERSALISM.

Universalism is the doctrine of universal salvation, or that all men will finally be saved. Several schemes of Universalism have been proposed, or several theories adopted, on the ground of which to carry all men to heaven.

The first form of Universalism, openly advocated in England and in this country, was that of Relly, Murray, Winchester, Huntington, and others. These men believed in the proper divinity and atonement of Christ, and that Christ literally obeyed the law, and suffered its penalty, for the whole human race. They taught that men must believe this doctrine, in order to come in possession of the purchased inheritance; and that, sooner or later, in this world or the next, all men would believe it and be saved. The first separate congregation of Universalists in England was of this stamp, and was founded by Mr. Relly in 1760. This form of Universalism still continues in England, though it has long since disappeared among ourselves.

A second class of Universalists insisted that the sins of men would be punished with everlasting destruction, while the sinners would be saved. In proof of this strange doctrine, they quoted and perverted the following passage from Paul: "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 15). I am not aware that this doctrine has now any living advocate.

Next came the Universalism of the Necessarians or Fatalists. They denied the free agency and accountability of man, and that there is any real, valid distinction between sin and holiness, right and wrong. "One man does the will of God as much as another. Every man answers the end for which he was made,

and, of course, is a fair candidate for everlasting happiness." This form of the doctrine still lives among us, but is not very openly advocated. Its moral tendencies are too grossly pernicious,—to say nothing of its absurdities,—to admit of its ever becoming popular.

Beyond and behind the above theories was that of a universal restoration. This supposes that there will be punishment beyond the grave; but that it will be entirely of a disciplinary character, intended and calculated for the good of the sufferer. It may continue, in some instances, for a very long period, but will terminate, at length, in a universal restoration. This form of doctrine was fully considered in the last two Lectures. It is plausible in appearance, and has many advocates among Unitarians as well as professed Universalists. It is that form of the error on which persons commonly fall back, when driven by their consciences, or their adversaries, to abandon its more glaring forms.

There is yet another form of Universalism, propounded by the late Mr. Hosea Ballou, of Boston, which has prevailed widely in the denomination, superseding the old-fashioned Universalism of Relly and Winchester, and quenching the fires of hell at a stroke. Universalists of this class are all of them Unitarians. They deny the divinity and atonement of Christ, and the personality and work of the Holy Spirit. They admit that men are sinners, in different degrees, but none of them entirely so. Of course they do not need a proper regeneration. These men believe the present life to be one, not of probation, but of righteous retribution, in which every act of every man, whether good or evil, meets with a full and just recompense. The judgment of God is a present judgment, and both the rewards of obedience and the penalties of disobedience are all of them received here.

This class of Universalists believe in a future life, but not one immediately succeeding the present, or which has any moral connection with it. The other life, upon which we shall enter together at the resurrection, will be a life by itself, in which the characters formed on earth will not affect us, and which will be to all a life of happiness. To make us acquainted with this future and happy life, is thought to be the principal

object of the Christian revelation. It is in this sense that life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel.

The novel character of this system, and its general prevalence among a portion of our fellow-men, require that it be carefully considered. In examining it, it will not be necessary to go into a consideration of those principles which it holds in common with other forms of error. I shall confine attention to the chief peculiarities of the system, which are the two following:—

1. This life is a state, not of probation, but of righteous retribution, where every act, whether good or evil, meets with a full and just recompense.

2. The conditions of men in the other world are not in the least affected by their characters here, but all, of every character, wake up there to endless happiness.

If these two principles are sustained, the system before us is sustained; but if these fall, the whole system falls with them. Let us, then, examine carefully these two fundamental principles.

And, first, is this life a state of probation, or one of righteous retribution? Is it, or is it not, true, that God's final judgments are being continually executed, and that the actions of men, whether good or evil, meet with a full and final reward here?

That the present life is one of probation, and not of retribution, is evident, in the first place, from the character of it. We read its design in its adaptation. From beginning to end it is fitted, adapted, to be one of trial. Our existence in this world (which is but for a few days) is made up, to a great extent, of sudden and trying changes. We are turned over and over, driven this way and that, placed in various situations, and subjected to the influence of different and often conflicting motives, and all this, obviously, that we may be tried,—that our characters may be formed and developed, and that it may be seen what manner of spirit we are of. God is so exhibiting his truth to the minds of his creatures, during their abode on earth, as to try, in the best manner, their faith; and he is so surrounding them with mingled light and darkness, temptations and restraints, and is so visiting them with mercies and judgments, joys and sorrows, as most effectually to try their hearts, draw out their

feelings, and prepare them for the decisions which await them hereafter.

Such, in brief, is the present life; and such it is known to be by all who have had experience of it. And from its very nature and character, the design of it, as I said, is manifest. It is altogether adapted to be a state of probation, and cannot reasonably be regarded in any other light.

That this life is a state of probation, and not of righteous retribution, we infer, secondly, from the fact that men are not treated here according to their characters. The righteous are often afflicted, and the wicked prospered. The righteous are the oppressed, and the wicked their oppressors and persecutors. The righteous are doomed to grapple with the dreaded ills of poverty, disease, and want, while the wicked roll in affluence, and have more than heart can wish. The best and holiest men are cut off by sudden death, while the vilest of men are spared, to curse the world by a length of years and an example of wickedness. Such is not, indeed, the invariable course of God's providence; but that such is its frequent course, and has been so in all past ages, cannot be doubted. Such it was with Job; which led his friends to conclude (in the spirit of those against whom we now reason) that Job must be a very wicked man. So it was, also, in the days of the Psalmist. He was distressed at the prosperity of the wicked, and could find no relief, till he looked away from present scenes to contemplate their miserable end (Ps. lxxiii. 3–20). So it was among the ancient heathen; which led some of their philosophers into atheism, and others more rationally to conclude that there must be a future life, where the disorders of the present will be rectified, and all will be treated according to their works. And such is the frequent course of God's providence now. There is no denying it, and no accounting for it but upon the supposition that this life is a state of probation, and not one of full and final retribution. On the former supposition, all is consistent, all plain; but there is no reconciling the known facts of divine providence with the supposition that men have their retribution here.

I know it will be said, that the seeming inequalities of provi-

dence are but visible, external things, and that these are fully compensated by the internal and invisible. The righteous enjoy a peace of conscience which more than makes up for all their outward sufferings, while the wicked are subjected to such tortures of conscience as serve to imbitter the whole cup of life.

Admitting that there is some force in this reply (as in truth there is), still it fails altogether to remove the difficulty. If the horrors of a guilty conscience are to be set over against the prosperity of the wicked, as constituting the full penalty of their wickedness, then these horrors ought regularly and constantly to increase, in proportion to their wickedness. The more wicked they are, and the longer they persist in doing evil, the greater their distress of conscience should be. But the facts of the case are, in general, the very opposite of this. When sinners first enter on their courses of wickedness, their consciences are tender, and they feel remorse; but by resisting and stifling conscience, and persisting in sin, they soon come to be well-nigh past feeling. Their "consciences are seared, as with a hot iron." They can perpetrate the greatest wickedness, the most horrid crimes, such as once would have stung their souls to madness, and yet feel little or no remorse. Such are the natural consequences of long-continued transgressions, as they are experienced in the present life. Such they are described in the Scriptures, and such they are declared to be in the confessions of pirates, robbers, murderers, and those who have been convicted of the most enormous crimes. And it is perfectly evident, from facts like these, that remorse of conscience, such as is experienced in the present life, cannot constitute the penalty of the divine law, or any part of that penalty. It remains true, therefore, notwithstanding all that can be said as to distress of conscience, that the wicked are not treated in this life, either externally or internally, according to their characters; and consequently, that this life cannot be (as is claimed by Universalists) a state of full and final retribution. If such a retribution is ever to be rendered, it must be done in a future life; for certainly it is not rendered here.

Thirdly: the supposition that this life is one of righteous

retribution, where every transgressor suffers the full reward of his deeds, is contradicted by the whole tenor of the gospel. On this ground, there is no such thing as forgiveness. Forgiveness is a remission of the incurred penalty of the law. But this penalty, on the supposition before us, is never remitted. It is endured to the full. Consequently there is no forgiveness; and all that we read in the Scriptures about forgiveness is a delusion.

On this ground, too, there is no grace in the gospel. Grace is unmerited, undeserved favor; but what undeserved favor is shown to those who receive, in this life, the full recompense of their deeds,—who are rewarded or punished exactly according to their deservings?

Indeed, the system before us excludes the gospel altogether. It is entirely and throughout a system of law. If men do well, they are rewarded according to law; or, if they sin, they are punished according to law. Do what they will, the law takes its course with them; and the gospel, as a scheme of mercy, is excluded.

The system we are considering is commonly spoken of as one of universal salvation; but this, again, is a gross misnomer. So far from universal salvation, it is not properly salvation at all. According to this doctrine, no sinner is saved. Merited punishment is never remitted. Every one suffers all the penalty he deserves. Consequently, every sinner is damned, not saved; and the system is one, not of universal salvation, but of universal damnation.

I remark once more: this system is contradicted by the whole testimony of Scripture on the subject. It is contradicted by those Scriptures which represent the divine judgment and final awards of the righteous and the wicked as not present, but future. According to the system before us, these are all present. The judgment of God is a present judgment; and the rewards both of well and of evil doings are present things. But such is not the teaching of the Bible. "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with them; for they shall eat of the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (Is.

iii. 10, 11). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 31).

This system is contradicted by those Scriptures in which it is asserted that men do not receive the full reward of their deeds in the present life. Thus it is said by the Psalmist: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; for, as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him" (Ps. ciii. 10, 11). The following is the language of the devout Ezra: "After all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this; should we again break thy commandments, wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us?" (Ez. ix. 13, 14.) It was said to Job, in the extremity of his sufferings: "Know, therefore, that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquities deserve" (Job. xi. 6). The mistake of those who hold that men are treated in this life exactly according to their characters is very like to that of the three friends of Job. They inferred, from the great afflictions of Job, that he was a very wicked man; and the Universalist is constrained, by his system, to draw the same inference; though he knows it is one which God expressly condemned.

No more need be said in refutation of the first grand principle of this modern Universalism. We proceed, therefore, to the second; which is, that the conditions of men, in the other world, are not at all affected by their characters here, but all, of every description, wake up there to endless happiness.

In refutation of this principle, I remark, first of all, that it is contradicted by the light of nature. The very heathen, who had no other light, knew better than to adopt so absurd a theory. Almost without an exception, they believed in a future life, and that the conditions of men in the other world were radically affected by the characters they had sustained here. If any doubt

this, let them consult the mythology of the ancient Egyptians; or the decisions of Minos and Rhadamanthus; or the views of the Romans, as set forth in the sixth book of Virgil's Æneid. Plato taught that the moment any one enters the other life, "he comes into the presence of his Judge, by whom, if he is corrupt, he is sent down to Tartarus, a most horrid gulf or prison in the bowels of the earth; but, if he is found righteous, he is dismissed to the island of the blessed." A portion of those who go down to Tartarus, Plato regarded as incurable, and never to be released.

It is admitted by Universalists that the Jews, in the time of Christ (with the exception of the Sadducees), believed in the eternity of future punishments;—a doctrine which, it is said, they had learned from the heathen. Why, then, did not our Saviour teach them better? As it was part of the object for which he came into the world to correct prevailing errors and delusions, and bear witness to the truth, why did he not correct the errors of his countrymen on this most important subject? Certainly, if the doctrine of eternal punishment is an error, and Christ sought to deliver his hearers from it, his language in regard to it was most extraordinary. It was such as confirmed his disciples in the error; and not only his immediate disciples, but the great body of Christians in all periods since.

But let us bring the principle under consideration directly to the test of Scripture. What say the inspired writers as to the question, whether the conditions of men hereafter are to be affected by their characters here; and whether the future life is to be one of universal happiness?

Let us first inquire as to the condition of the righteous in the other world. Are they, or are they not, to be benefited there, in consequence of their goodness here? "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven" (Matt. v. 12). "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind; for they cannot recompense you; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke xiv. 14). And what does our Saviour mean by the exhortation

to lay up treasure in heaven, if our condition in the other world has no connection with our actions here? Paul says: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." He says, also, in respect to himself: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day" (2 Tim. iv. 8). The same apostle speaks of some, who were tortured, "not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Heb. xi. 36).

Such are some of the passages which speak expressly of the connection between this and the future life, so far as the rewards of the righteous are concerned. There are others, which refer both to the righteous and the wicked, and connect the future destinies of both classes with the transactions of the present life. Such is the story of the rich man and Lazarus. "Remember that thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke xvi. 25, 38). So also in our Saviour's account of the last judgment; the awards are all based upon character sustained,—upon actions done, or not done, in the present life (Matt. xxv. 35-43). We have a similar account of the awards of the judgment, and the reasons of them, in the Revelation: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. xx. 12-15).

Our Saviour presents the same view of the case in another passage, connecting the eternal destinies of men with their conduct in the present life. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 28). Paul, too, says: "We must all appear before the judg-

ment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10).

I know not how it is possible for language to set forth more clearly than these passages do, the connection between the present and the future life; resting the conditions of men there, whether of weal or woe, upon the characters which they have sustained here.

It is pertinent, also, in this connection, to quote Scriptures to show, that a portion of the human race will be miserable in the future world; since the proposition before us affirms that there are no miseries there; that that life will be to all a life of happiness. How is it possible, by any fair interpretation, to reconcile with this idea the story, or (if any please so to consider it) the parable, of the rich man and Lazarus? "The rich man died, and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment" (Luke xvi. 23). Take, also, the following representations of our Saviour: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, but fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell" (Luke xii. 5). "At the end of the world, the angels shall come forth, and shall sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xiii. 50). I ask not what meaning may, by any possibility of torture, be put upon passages such as these; but what is their plain and obvious meaning? What would any person, not committed to a system, and intent only on learning the sense, understand them to mean? What have they been understood to mean, by ninety-nine hundredths, and more, of the whole Christian world? There ought to be, and there can be, no question here. Our Saviour taught, as plainly as words can teach anything, that the conditions of men in the future world are affected, yea determined, by their characters here; and that that world is not to all a state of happiness. The wicked "shall go away into everlasting punishment." They shall be cast into a lake of fire, where "shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," and where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever."

I have dwelt longer on this particular form of Universalism, because it has of late years prevailed more extensively in the denomination than any other. I have drawn out its peculiar features, and have shown that the two grand principles, on which the whole fabric rests, have no foundation in reason, or the word of God. So far from this, they are contradicted and refuted by both. We are constrained to believe, therefore, that the system which has been examined, like each of the other forms of Universalism, is a delusion. It is a lure, a bait of the great adversary, by which he is ensnaring unwary souls, and dragging them down, by hundreds and thousands, to the pit below.

There is yet another form of Universalism, more recent than the one which has been considered, and which is received with favor by a portion of the denomination. The advocates of this theory laugh (as well they may) at the miserable attempts of their brethren to explain away those parts of the Bible which speak of the future and eternal punishment of the wicked. They think it nobler, honester, better, on all accounts, to set aside these passages,—to discard them from the book of God. They think pretty well of the Bible in the general, and will receive so much of it as seems to them reasonable; but cannot be bound by it as the standard of their faith. We honor the frankness of these men, however much we may detest their principles. If they do not like certain portions of the Bible, and are resolved not to receive them, they had better renounce them openly. If they are infidels in fact, they had better become such in name and in form. Then the Christian world will understand them, and know how to meet them. The question as to the divine authority and inspiration of the Bible, and the whole Bible, is not a new one. We have considered that, and know where we stand. When Universalism is brought to such an issue, we have no anxiety as to the result.

It is incumbent on ministers of the gospel, at the present day, to be thoroughly acquainted with the different forms of Universalism, and especially with its more recent forms, that they may know how to meet them, and contradict their seductive influences. It is not enough to understand and refute the

older systems,—such as were taught by Relly, and Murray, and Winchester, and others of the last century. These, though dating back less than a hundred years, have long since waxed old, and are ready to vanish away. A minister may refute all these, and yet scarcely touch the more recent theories which lie floating about in the minds of individuals at the present day. It becomes those who are set for the defence of the gospel to note the present aspects of error, and exert themselves for their removal. Let them watch the present movements of the great adversary of souls, lay open his schemes of falsehood, and expose the cunning craftiness whereby he lies in wait to deceive. In this way they may hope to rescue those whom he is seeking to destroy.

LECTURE LVII.

ANNIHILATION.

THERE are persons, who shrink from either of the foregoing theories of Universalism, who yet deny the eternal punishment of the wicked. They hold that all of the human race who exist forever will be happy; but that the incorrigibly wicked will cease to exist. They will be literally consumed, destroyed. In other words, they will be annihilated.

Some tell us that the annihilation takes place at death. Those who hold this opinion are, in general, materialists. They deny that man has any proper soul, as distinct from the body. He is all body, altogether material; and, consequently, when the body dissolves in death, the entire man goes out of existence. He ceases to be.

This was the doctrine of the ancient Sadducees, who said that "there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit," whom our Saviour contradicted and refuted. "Ye do greatly err," said he, "not knowing the Scriptures, and the power of God" (Matt. xxii. 29).

Other annihilationists, who are also materialists, believe that the final destruction takes place at the close of the judgment. There will be a resurrection, both of the just and the unjust, and all will stand together at the bar of God. But in the issue of the judgment, when the righteous will enter on an immortal life, the wicked will be annihilated.

But neither of the above theories of annihilation is the one most commonly advocated at the present day. The most plausible view of the doctrine, and that most generally received, at least by those who have any claim to be regarded as evangelical Christians, is the following: Man has a soul distinct from the

body, which survives the body, and which was originally designed, and is adapted, to be immortal. But by sinning against God, he has forfeited and lost his immortality. The death threatened to our first parents, in case of transgression, was annihilation. The reason why the sentence was not immediately executed upon them was, that they and their posterity might have a probation of grace. Christ has died for them; free offers of mercy are made to them in his name; and all who accept these offers will receive, in the most literal acceptation of the terms, eternal life. Their lost immortality will be restored to them, and will be a blessed and glorious immortality. But on all who refuse to accept of Christ during the time of their probation, the sentence of annihilation will be finally executed. They will be, in the most literal sense of the term, destroyed. Some suppose this destruction will take place immediately after the judgment; others, that it will be preceded by a long period of suffering in the other world. But, ultimately, all the wicked will go out of existence. They will be as though they had never been. Such is the doctrine, so far as I have been able to gather it, from conversation with its advocates, and from their writings.

In support of it, it is alleged first of all, that death literally signifies annihilation; that so our first parents must have understood it; and that wherever the word death is used in the Scriptures to set forth the final doom of the wicked, it can mean nothing else. But is it true that death literally and properly signifies annihilation? What does it annihilate? Not the body; for the dead body still remains. It may be seen and handled as really as before. No one can doubt this, who ever saw a corpse, or assisted in preparing one for burial. The truth is, death, in its primary and literal signification, annihilates no material thing. It changes the form of living substances; in its issues, it dissolves them, and turns them back to their primary ingredients; but death, I repeat, annihilates nothing.

And if death cannot annihilate material substances, much less does it put an end to human souls. Who ever heard of a soul's being annihilated? Where did it live? To whom did it be-

long? The sacred writers often use the words dead and death (in figurative senses) as applicable to the soul; but never in the sense of annihilation. "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. iii. 1). "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. v. 6). "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John iii. 14). "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1). "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. viii. 6). In all these, and in many like passages, the word death is used in reference to the soul, importing what is commonly called a spiritual death. But none of them sets forth the annihilation of the soul. So far from this, the very idea of annihilation is precluded.

We also read in the Scriptures of "the second death"—the same which is sometimes called eternal death. But here again the idea of annihilation is precluded. "The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. xxi. 8). Here we have a divinely inspired definition or description of the second death. We are told plainly what it is. The miserable subjects of it are not annihilated, but "have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

But we are told that as eternal life imports an immortal existence, eternal death, which is its opposite, must import annihilation. But does eternal life import simply eternal existence; or not rather an eternally blessed existence? On this point we may quote Mr. Hudson, one of the principal advocates of annihilation. "We disclaim," he says, "the representation that eternal life signifies mere eternal existence. We certainly believe in eternal blessedness; and we think this is implied in the phrase eternal life."[1] We may quote to the same purpose a greater than Mr. Hudson. "This," says our Saviour, "is life eternal; that they might know thee, the only true God, and

[1] Christ our Life, p. 4.

Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). We see, then, what is meant by eternal life,—not a mere eternal existence, but an eternally blessed existence with God and with Christ in heaven. And if so, what must be its opposite, eternal death? Certainly not the mere cessation of conscious existence. This is not the suggested idea. The opposite of eternal holiness and blessedness in heaven can be no other than eternal sinning and suffering in hell.

But there are other words besides death on which great stress is laid in this argument for annihilation. The wicked are said in the Scriptures to be consumed, destroyed, burned up, lost: a phraseology which imports that they pass utterly out of existence; or, which is the same, that they are annihilated. "The Lord preserveth all them that love him, but all the wicked will he destroy" (Ps. cxlv. 20). "Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. x. 28). "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power" (2 Thess. i. 9). "For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. iv. 1). "He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. iii. 12). It is thought that these, and the like expressions, which occur with an awful frequency in the Bible, can import nothing less than the utter annihilation of the wicked. A thing which is consumed, destroyed, burned up, lost, can be no longer in existence. It is annihilated. Such is the literal and proper meaning of the words.

But is this declaration true? Is such the literal and proper meaning of the words in question? Joshua and his army destroyed the Canaanites; but did he annihilate them? Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem; but did he annihilate it? Did not "its dust and ruins" still remain? "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help" (Hos. xiii. 9). Did these Israelites annihilate themselves? If so, with what propriety is it added, "In me is thy help"? Our Saviour is said, "through death to have destroyed him who hath the power of

death, that is the devil" (Heb. ii. 14). But did our Saviour literally annihilate the devil, when he hung upon the cross?

We may take the two strongest of the passages above quoted, —the strongest, probably, which the Bible contains; and see if they import a literal annihilation. "Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, and they that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." "He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Suppose a thing to be burned up, so as to leave neither root nor branch; is it thereby annihilated? By no means. To burn up and consume is only to change the form of things,—not to annihilate them. The fuel which we burn upon the hearth passes into other forms of existence, but not one particle is lost. Water may be evaporated; gas may be burned; but the substance of both still exists. The dissolved particles may be again collected, and they will be found to weigh as much as before. And so through the entire range of substances known to man. Through every disorganization and reconstruction, under the action of every element,—heat, light, electricity, no matter what,—the particles composing the substance still remain, and for aught we at present know, will remain forever.

The state of the wicked in the other world is sometimes represented by the word lost; and to be lost is thought to be the same as annihilated. But a comparison of passages shows that there is no soundness in this argument. "What man of you, if he have an hundred sheep, and lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" (Luke xv. 4.) This lost sheep, surely, was not annihilated; for, in that case, it could never be found. "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (Luke xv. 32). Here, the prodigal son is said to have been both dead and lost; and yet he was all the while alive, and ere long was restored to his father. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"—not annihilated, for, in that case, there would be nothing left to seek or save—(Luke xix. 10).

It will be said, perhaps, that we use the word annihilate in

too strict a sense. The particles of which a man consists may never be literally annihilated; yet, if they become so disorganized and scattered that he no longer exists as a conscious, active being, he is, as to all punitive or practical purposes, annihilated. But how are the parts and particles of which a man consists to be so separated and scattered, that he is no longer a conscious, active being? If he were all particles, altogether material, perhaps this might be done. But we are now at issue with those who believe that man has a soul, as well as a body,—a soul that can exist without the body,—a soul that is not made up of particles, but is one simple, uniform, spiritual substance, like that of God; and how is such a soul to lose permanently its active, conscious existence but by a literal annihilation? It cannot be disorganized and separated into elementary particles, for it is not made up of them. Such is not the nature of its substance. Obviously, a soul, such as we all possess, must exist on forever, a thinking, feeling, conscious, active being, or it must be annihilated.

Finally, we are referred to certain passages in the Old Testament, which are thought to teach annihilation. "In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave, who shall give thee thanks?" (Ps. vi. 5.) "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest" (Ecc. ix. 10). "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth; he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Ps. cxlvi. 3, 4). Jeremiah says of the princes and wise men of Babylon: "I will make them drunk, and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake, saith the king, whose name is the Lord of hosts" (Jer. li. 57).

My first remark in regard to these passages is, that if they prove anything, they prove too much for the class of men with whom I now reason. They prove that the cessation of active, conscious existence takes place in death, and pervades the entire region of the grave. "In death, there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave, who shall give thee thanks?" "There

is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

But the probability is that these and the like passages have no reference at all to the subject before us. Some of them refer to the state of the body, which lies unconscious in the dust. Others go to show that not even the souls of the dead have any longer an active interest and concern—such as they once had—in the affairs of this life. "His breath goeth forth; he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." As much as to say, in the moment of death, the designs, the plans of men for this world are all cut off. The rich fool in the gospel was planning to pull down his barns, and build greater, and to enjoy life for many years. But death came unexpectedly, and in that very day his thoughts perished.

I have no occasion here to go into a consideration of arguments from reason, or from the divine perfections, against the eternal punishment of the wicked, and in favor of annihilation; as these have been fully examined in a previous Lecture.

It remains that I urge arguments to disprove the doctrine which has been considered; to show that the wicked, in the other world, will not be annihilated, but will exist and be punished forever as they deserve.

1. The theory of annihilation contradicts palpably and confessedly the commonly received doctrine of the immortality of the human soul. The arguments from reason and nature in favor of the soul's immortality are some of them of the most convincing character. They are so strong that all nations, even where the light of the gospel has not shined, have held to the doctrine.[1] The sense of accountableness, which every human being feels, and of which he can never entirely rid himself, directs

[1] "The savages of North America, the Indians of Mexico, the islanders of the Pacific, the races of Southern Africa, who seem to dwell in the shadow land that lies between the beastly and the human, Bushmen and New Zealanders, Kamschadales, and Fijis, Peruvians and Esquimaux, Papuans and Caribs, the sad-eyed natives of Hispaniola and the fierce Patagonians, swift of foot; the scorched barbarians of the South, and the bleached barbarians of the North, without exception, confess, fearfully and grotesquely enough, but all the more vehemently for that, their anticipation of another life. The form which the anticipation assumes may be fanciful, but the anticipation is clear and deep;—clear enough not to be obscured by superstition; deep enough not to be obliterated by misery or fear."—*Chris. Examiner* for June, 1861, p. 18.

him to a future, where every one must give an account of himself to God. Then the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments in the present life points, infallibly, in the same direction. If God is a righteous moral governor and judge, then there must be another world, where the disorders of the present will be rectified, and every one will be treated according to his works. And then the capacities and faculties of the human soul, all fitted and adapted for a measureless improvement, show clearly that it was made for eternity. This argument is as conclusive upon the final destiny of the soul, as is that drawn from the different structures of animals in regard to their different habits and modes of life.

These arguments from nature, as to the immortality of the soul, are all of them confirmed by the clearer light of revelation. Even in the Old Testament, we have enough to convince us, that while the body and the brute are mortal, the human spirit is immortal. "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the brute that goeth downward to the earth" (Ecc. iii. 21). "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecc. xii. 7). "They that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2). But it is in the gospel, emphatically, that "life and immortality are brought to light,"—immortality, not for a particular class of men, but for all. Whether righteous or wicked, all have entered upon an existence which is never to end. Now, it is objection enough to the theory of annihilation, that it contradicts, confessedly and palpably, this great doctrine of immortality. For all the wicked who die in their sins, there is, we are told, no immortality. They are to be annihilated. Shame upon the men, living under the glorious light of the gospel, whose opinions on this subject are more gross and false than those of the heathen!

2. Annihilation is no proper punishment for sin, and cannot be regarded as the penalty of God's law. According to the doctrine which has been considered, annihilation is the penalty of God's law. This was the death threatened to our first parents, and the death which will ultimately come upon all who obey not

the gospel. Thus, Mr. Green, one of its teachers, asks: "What is the penalty of the law? Not life in misery, but death. The wages of sin is death, The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death:—understanding by death, in all these passages, not life in misery, but annihilation" (Tract, p. 3).

Now, in opposition to all such statements, we insist that annihilation is not, and cannot be, the penalty of the divine law. We know what the penalty of the law is, for it has once been executed. It was executed upon the angels when they sinned. For them there was no probation of grace. They had no reprieve. The penalty of the law fell upon them in the moment of their transgression, and has been upon them ever since. And what was it? They were not annihilated, but "cast down to hell," where they "are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day" (2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6). Again: the penalty of the divine law will be inflicted on all the wicked at the close of the judgment. The wicked will then be brought up together for trial. They will have a trial; at the close of which their sentence is pronounced, and is immediately executed. And what is it? "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv. 41, 46).

I know it is said that annihilation is everlasting punishment, because it is everlasting in its consequences. But as well might it be said that hanging or flogging is everlasting punishment, because these are everlasting in their consequences. Indeed, with more propriety may it be said of the ordinary modes of human punishment that they are everlasting; for they are followed by a train of consequences that will have no end; whereas, to the subjects of it, annihilation cuts off all consequences. A perpetual nonentity is beyond the reach of consequences forever.

And this shows us, that annihilation, so far from being the penalty of the law, is, in no proper sense of the term, a punishment. On the contrary, it cuts off all punishment. It renders it impossible that the subjects of it should ever be punished

more. Punishment necessarily implies the existence of a subject to bear it. If it is a just punishment, it implies the existence of a guilty subject, who feels, or who ought to feel, that his punishment is just. But, on the theory before us, the subject of punishment is no longer in existence. He is a nonentity—nothing; and how is it possible to punish nothing?

Mr. Green does not seem quite satisfied, after all, to make annihilation the whole penalty of the law; and so he couples with it, at least in many instances, long periods of antecedent suffering. "The doom of the wicked," he says, "will be inconceivably dreadful. The duration of their suffering may be a long period prior to their final destruction." It is in this way that he accounts for "the different degrees of punishment" among the finally lost. (Tract, pp. 6, 10.) But this shows, still further, that annihilation, so far from being a punishment, is rather to be considered as a release. How must the miserable subjects of these dreadful antecedent sufferings look forward to it, and pray for it, as their only remaining hope? The devils who, we are told, are to be annihilated,[1] have already been suffering for many thousands of years, and are yet to suffer we know not how long. With what intense desire must they be looking forward to the time, when their existence, and with it all their miseries, shall come to a final end? And yet we are told that this longed-for annihilation is the proper penalty of the divine law, and all the penalty which is threatened to the transgressor!

3. The doctrine of annihilation is disproved by many Scriptures. We have before seen that it is not proved by those passages which are most relied upon to support it; as where the wicked are threatened with death, destruction, perdition, etc. These words signify, to the miserable subjects of them, the destruction, not of their being, but of their well-being; the loss of spiritual life; the death and ruin of all their comforts and hopes. We are now to show that the annihilation of the wicked is contradicted by a vast amount of Scripture testimony. It is contradicted in the Old Testament. The prophet Daniel says of the wicked in the last great day, not that they are to

[1] See Mr. Green's Tract, p. 10.

be annihilated, but they are raised "to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2). In the prophecy of Isaiah, the sinners in Zion are represented as afraid, not of annihilation, but of something infinitely worse. "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with the everlasting burnings?" (Is. xxxiii. 14.)

But, in the New Testament, the evidence against annihilation, and in proof of eternal sinning and suffering, thickens, and becomes more decisive. "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). I know it is said, though the fire is everlasting, those who are plunged into it may not live and suffer in it forever. But this is a mere quibble. Suppose the sentence had run thus: Depart, ye cursed, into a fire that shall burn a hundred or a thousand years; who could think otherwise than that the persons so sentenced were to suffer in that fire as long? Why should the duration of the fire be specified at all, if the suffering was not to be commensurate with it? "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv. 46). But everlasting punishment, we have before seen, implies the everlasting existence of its guilty subjects to endure it. Annihilation ends all punishment; since nought remains subsequent to this which can be punished.

It is said of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the surrounding cities, that, "giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh," they "are set forth as examples, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7). It is pretended, I know, that the language here refers to the guilty cities, and not to their inhabitants. But was it the cities or their inhabitants, that gave themselves over to fornication, and went after strange flesh? Besides; the cities, as such, have not suffered the vengeance of eternal fire. They were in a little time consumed and sunk; and the Dead Sea has rolled its waves over them ever since.

The Apostle Paul tells us that "unto them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality, God will render eternal life." But "unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth," what will he render?

Not annihilation, but "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil" (Rom. ii. 8, 9). To all such "is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 13).

At the conclusion of his parables of the tares, and of the net, our Saviour sets forth the final destination of the wicked. "At the end of the world, the angels shall come forth, and shall sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xiii. 5, 11; see, also, Luke xiii. 28). The phraseology here used implies a state of intense and continued suffering, and can never be made consistent with the doctrine of annihilation.

In other passages, our Saviour is, if possible, even more explicit. "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than, having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 43–48).

And what are we to think of the following passages from the Revelation? "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark on his forehead, or on his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest, day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (Rev. xiv. 9–11). Again, the writer of this book—speaking of the wicked just before the end of the world, who are to go forth in

great numbers for the destruction of God's people—says: "There came down a fire from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented, day and night, forever and ever" (Rev. xx. 10). Mr. Green has no way to evade the force of these passages but by saying, that the words "forever and ever" may signify a limited duration. (Tract, p. 6.) But we have seen, in a former Lecture, that such a supposition is impossible. The writers of the New Testament have used these words more than twenty times, and the writer of the Apocalypse fourteen times, and always (unless it be the cases before us) to denote an endless duration. And yet, by these decisive, unambiguous words, is here set forth the duration of the miseries of the lost. And now, if this does not decide the question, against annihilationists and universalists, as to the endless punishment of the wicked, we may well despair of its ever being decided by words. No form of speech, more convincing or decisive than that which has been exhibited, can ever be used.

I shall quote but another passage in proof of the endless sinning and suffering of the wicked, and that shall be from this same wonderful book—the Revelation. Away down the track of time, beyond the millennium, beyond the final judgment, and when the righteous have all entered upon their eternal reward, we are told of some who are not in the heavenly city. They are not annihilated, but they are excluded. And who are they? What is their character and state? "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." And are these guilty beings irrecoverably in this state of ruin and sin? Are they without hope? "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Rev. xxii. 11, 15).

4. I urge once more against the annihilation of the wicked, that such an event would frustrate the ultimate end and purpose of God in their creation. "The Lord," we are told, "hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov. xvi. 4). God will be glorified in all his creatures; in all his works. He was as really glorified in Pharaoh

as in Moses, though not, of course, in the same way. "In very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show my power in thee, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth" (Ex. ix. 16). The finally miserable, though lost to themselves, are not lost to the universe, or to God. "We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ," says Paul, "both in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savor of death unto death, and to the other of life unto life" (2 Cor. ii. 16). "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious" (Is. xlix. 5). God will be glorified in the final doom of his enemies, and the universe will be benefited by means of them forever. Like the Sodomites of old, they "are set forth as examples, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." They are held up, *in terrorem*, before the universe, to declare God's justice and deter from sin. There are certain traits of God's holy character, of the utmost importance to him as a righteous moral governor,—such as his inflexible regard for the honor of his law, his inviolable truth, his glorious justice, his holy hatred of sin, and his determination to punish it as it deserves forever,—which cannot be adequately displayed but by his inflicting upon incorrigible transgressors the just penalty of his law, which is eternal death. To cut off this penalty by an act of annihilation would be to defeat these holy purposes, and show that God had made at least a portion of his intelligent creatures in vain. We may be sure, therefore, that this will never be. God's truth, his justice, his honor and glory as a moral governor, his regard for the best interests of his holy kingdom, alike forbid it. Of course, it can never be done. The wicked will sin on and suffer on; they will grow more and more hardened and miserable, to all eternity. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever."

Some tell us that the doctrine of annihilation, if it be an error, is an amiable one, and a harmless one,—one which can be followed by no injurious results. But we cannot be of this opinion. All error is more or less dangerous. But the one we have considered is, in some of its aspects, peculiarly so. It detracts from the fear of God, and from the regard which we all ought to have for his holy law. In the same proportion it

diminishes our sense of the great evil of sin. The Apostle Paul tells us that "by the law"—the whole law—not only the precept, but the penalty,—"by the law is the knowledge of sin." And this is true. When we look at the fearful penalty which God has denounced against sin,—the greatest which he can inflict or we endure,—one differing in degree according to the degree of our guilt, but in all cases measureless in its duration; we see, at once, that sin must be an infinite evil. Or, if any dislike the term infinite, it must be the greatest evil which we can possibly commit, and deserves the greatest punishment which we can endure. Such are the views which the commonly received doctrine of eternal punishment is fitted to impress upon us as to the evil of sin. But if we take away from the fearful penalty of the law; if we remove it or cut it short by annihilation; just so much we weaken the law. We detract from its majesty and its binding authority. Our sense of the evil of sin is proportionably removed, and the probability is that we may never see it in its true light, and repent of it in dust and ashes.

By detracting from our sense of the inviolable strictness of God's law, and the dreadful evil of transgressing it, this doctrine of annihilation tends to diminish the worth, and even the work, of redeeming mercy. Redemption from everlasting burnings is one thing; deliverance from annihilation is quite another. The former requires an infinite atonement; the latter, being a mere act of power, may be accomplished in a different way. The former creates an exigency and a necessity for the interposition of the Eternal Son of God; the latter may be effected immediately by the Father, or, if he pleases, through the instrumentality of some inferior being. Hence the connection logically, and in frequent instances actually, between the doctrine of annihilation and Arian or Socinian speculations as to the person of Christ.

The doctrine we have considered has also a lax moral tendency. It removes some of the strongest motives which God in his mercy has given us to deter from sin. The penalty which God has affixed to his law is a dreadful penalty, warning us off from the practice of sin by every motive of horror and

of fear. And yet even this is no more than sufficient to sustain the authority of law, and in myriads of instances has proved insufficient to prevent transgression. In full view of the devouring fire and everlasting burnings, creatures have had the madness to transgress. What, then, must be the effect of diminishing the penalty of God's law, and ultimately of taking it quite away,—of quenching the devouring fire, and dissipating the column of smoke and flame which God has assured us shall ascend up from the bottomless pit forever?

The natural effect of such teaching is perfectly obvious. It tends to weaken those good moral influences which God, in his mercy, has thrown about us. It tends to encourage the wicked in their evil courses, and to make them bold and easy in their sins. The worst they have to fear is annihilation, which puts an end at once to all suffering; and they are quite willing to meet such an issue, if they may be indulged at present in the vices which they love.

I do not say that all believers in annihilation reason in this way, and draw from it encouragement in the practice of wickedness. By no means. But I do say that the natural tendencies of the doctrine are such as I have indicated; and, were it generally to prevail, these tendencies would soon be manifest in the utter prostration of evangelical religion, both in principle and practice.

Let us, then, avoid the insidious error. Mischief is concealed under it, and will ere long spring out of it. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

LECTURE LVIII.

THE SABBATH.

In calling your attention to the weekly Sabbath, it is proposed, first, to inquire as to the origin of it. This blessed institution originated in Paradise, and was given to man immediately after his creation. This is evident,—

1. From the account which is given of it in the second chapter of Genesis. "On the seventh day, God ended his work which he had made; and he rested," or kept a Sabbath, "on the seventh day, from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested," or kept a Sabbath, "from all his work which he had made" (Gen. ii. 2, 3). By sanctifying this day of his rest, or Sabbath, we are to understand that God set it apart, and consecrated it as a holy day. And in blessing it, he appointed that, to all who should observe it in a proper manner, a blessing should follow. Here, then, we have a full and formal institution of the Sabbath. It commenced with the creation, and was among the first institutions that were given to the new-made world.

2. That the Sabbath was instituted at this time is further evident from the early and universal division of time into weeks. Two periods have been fixed upon for the commencement of the Sabbath. The first is that mentioned above; the other is during the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness. But on the latter supposition, how are we to account for the early and universal division of time into weeks? There is a natural reason why time should be divided into moons or months, and also into years; but there is no natural reason for its being divided into weeks of seven days. And yet it was so divided,

by the Patriarchs, who lived long before the time of Moses, and by heathen nations who never heard of him. Thus God says to Noah: "Yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain on the earth" (Gen. vii. 4). And when Noah had sent out the dove from the ark, and she returned, he tarried seven days, and sent her forth again; and then he tarried seven other days, and sent her forth again (Gen. viii. 10, 12). And so Laban, when he had deceived Jacob in regard to his wife, said: "Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this other also" (Gen. xxix. 27). No good reason can be assigned for this early and peculiar division of time, except that it was so divided, at the creation, by God himself.

3. We have further evidence of the primeval institution of the Sabbath, in that the ancient heathen nations not only divided their time into weeks, but regarded the seventh as a sacred day. Of this the learned Mr. Seldon has collected many proofs.[1] The following passages occur in Homer: "The seventh arose, a sacred day." And again: "The seventh day came, when all things were laid aside." Eusebius represents Solon as proclaiming the seventh to be a holy day. Clemens Alexandrinus says: "Not only the Hebrews, but also the Greeks regarded the seventh day as sacred."

The seventh day was held to be sacred among the ancient Tuscans and Romans. Thus Dion says, in his Roman history: "The same Sabbath which was in use among the Jews, obtained also among the Greeks and Romans." And Postell remarks that, "next to the Jews, the Romans were the first observers of the Sabbath." Josephus, in his work against Apion, very confidently asserts that "there is not any city of the Grecians, nor any of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the seventh day has not come."[2] Even the Hindoos have a day which they call Sunday, and which "is regarded as more sacred than any other day of the week."

In view of these testimonies, it cannot be doubted that among most of the ancient heathen nations the seventh day was regarded as a sacred day. It was Saturn's day, from which our name Saturday is derived. And now, in what way shall this

[1] De Jure Nat. et Gentium, Lib. iii. c. 16.
[2] Book ii. Sect. 40; Allen's India, p. 399.

fact be accounted for, but upon the supposition that the seventh day was set apart and sanctified, by divine authority, from the beginning of the world?

4. The manner in which Moses first speaks of the Sabbath to the Israelites shows that it was an institution with which they had been long acquainted. They were now in the desert, and manna had been given for their support, with the injunction that they were to secure only enough each day for their daily sustenance. But it came to pass on the sixth day of their week, without any particular direction on the subject, that they gathered twice as much as on other days. How came they to do this, unless they had been accustomed to observe the seventh day as one of rest? However, the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses, "and Moses said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said: To-morrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the Lord" (Ex. xvi. 23). The whole account proves, conclusively, that here was not the origin of a new institution in Israel, but only an incidental reference to one which had been long known and observed.

We regard it, therefore, as proved, beyond a doubt, that the weekly Sabbath was instituted in Paradise, immediately after the creation of the world. As it was given to commemorate the work of creation, why should it not have been instituted at that period? What so proper time in which to commence it? Why should there have been a delay of more than two thousand years; and then the institution be given to a single people, who had no more interest in observing it than all the rest of mankind?

We remark, secondly, in regard to the Sabbath, that the obligation to observe it is universal and perpetual. This is evident,—

1. From what has been already said. If the Sabbath was instituted in Paradise, then doubtless it was instituted for man,—everywhere. It was instituted for the race. No reason can be given why it should have been instituted so early after the creation, if it was intended only for the Jews. Then,—

2. The law of the Sabbath constitutes an important part of the decalogue, or moral law. The ten commandments differ,

in several respects, from the other written commands of God. They were delivered, in an audible voice, from the top of Sinai, not to Moses alone, but directly to all the congregation of Israel. They were also written, not by Moses in a book, but by the finger of God on tables of stone. They were written on stone to denote their everlasting durability,—that they should never be revoked, and never would vanish away. And, with the exception of the fourth, they are all of them, confessedly, of perpetual obligation. How, then, can it be doubted that the same is true of the fourth commandment? Why should this be thrust in among nine others, which we know are binding upon all people, in all ages, and the same honors be put upon this as upon either of them, unless this, too, is equally binding; unless this is of universal and perpetual obligation?

The fourth commandment not only stands in the midst of the other nine, but it forms a very considerable and most important part of them. The two tables of the law would be incomplete without it. The first four of these commandments were written on the first table, and enjoin the duties which we owe more directly to God. The last six were written on the second table, and contain the duties which we owe to man. But take away the fourth commandment, and the first table would be incomplete. We should, in that case, have services enjoined to be rendered directly to God, but should have no time appointed for their performance. The time for performing religious duties would be left to the choice of individuals; and it is easy to see that, in this wicked world, there would soon be no religion at all.

The fourth commandment is also distinguished among the rest, because it is expressed with greater fulness and particularity, and because it intends to support them all. Take away the fourth commandment, and with it the Sabbath, and the force of every command would be weakened and measurably destroyed. Each command in the decalogue tends, in some way, to strengthen the others; but the institution of the Sabbath has a peculiar tendency to strengthen and enforce them all. We infer, therefore, with the highest assurance, that the obligation to observe the Sabbath is universal and perpetual. If men are

bound, everywhere, to honor their parents, and to abstain from murder, adultery, and theft; they are equally bound to "remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy."

3. We infer the universal obligation of the Sabbath from the fact that the ends to be answered by it are of universal interest and concern. The design of any divine institution may be learned from the ends which it is fitted to answer. If these ends have respect only to one particular nation or period, then we have a right to limit the institution to that same nation or period. But if the ends to be answered are interesting alike to all nations and to all time, we infer that the institution was intended for all. Now, it is an obvious fact that no end or purpose can be thought of, which the Sabbath was ever fitted to answer, which is not of equal interest now. Was this sacred day set apart as a season for commemorating the glories of creation? But all men are equally interested in creation, and may with equal propriety be called upon to celebrate its glories. Or was the Sabbath instituted to afford a grateful season of rest to laboring and weary mortals? But men of all ages and countries are alike doomed to labor, and stand alike in need of rest. Or was the Sabbath instituted to furnish a statedly recurring opportunity for religious worship and improvement? But all men have equal need of such an opportunity, and without it their spiritual interests must essentially suffer. If our first parents needed a Sabbath for the ends here specified, in their original state of innocence and purity, much more do their fallen descendants need a Sabbath, who are naturally averse to religion, and are doomed to eat their bread in the sweat of their face.

4. The ancient prophets and our Saviour speak of the Sabbath as not to terminate with the Jewish dispensation, but as to be continued and observed under the gospel, God promises, by Isaiah, that, in gospel times, when his house shall be called a house of prayer for all people, "those who keep his Sabbath from polluting it, and take hold of his covenant, shall be brought to his holy mountain, and be made joyful in his house of prayer" (Is. lvi. 6, 7). Here is an express promise that the Sabbath shall be continued under the gospel, and that

abundant spiritual blessings shall rest on those who faithfully observe it.

Our Saviour, too, when predicting the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to be accomplished under the gospel dispensation, says: "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day;"—a clear intimation that he intended the Sabbath should exist, and be observed, under the gospel (Matt. xxiv. 20).

5. Our Saviour's declaration, "The Sabbath was made for man," proves incontestably that it was intended for all people. The institution was not given for the Jews only, or for any particular place or period, but for men,—for all men. It was given to the race, and was intended to be observed by the race universally.

6. The Sabbath is represented in the Scriptures as a type of heaven (Heb. iv. 1–11). It may be regarded as a law of typical institutions, that the type continues until the antitype is realized. Thus the bloody rites of the old dispensation, which prefigured the death of Christ, continued in full force and validity until his blood was shed upon the cross; in which eventful hour,—the hour of the crucifixion,—they passed finally away. But on this principle, the Sabbath, which typifies the rest of heaven, must continue until it is swallowed up and lost in its bright antitype; until all the Sabbath-keepers of earth are received up to enjoy their long Sabbath in heaven. In other words, it must continue until the general conflagration and the end of the world. It was instituted at the creation of the world, and will continue in full force and validity till earth and time shall be no more.

I recollect but one passage of Scripture which has been cited, with any show of reason, as in opposition to the views which have been here expressed. It has been taught, by some, that the Apostle Paul reckons the Sabbath among the abolished institutions of the Jewish religion. "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days" (Col. ii. 16). But it is most likely, from the connection, that by Sabbath days, in this instance, the apostle intended the abolished Jewish festivals, which are sometimes denominated Sabbaths. Or, if he referred to the

weekly Sabbath at all, it must have been to the Jewish Sabbath, which was observed on a different day from that of the Christians. He certainly could not have referred to that sacred day, on which he, with other apostles, and all the early Christians, were accustomed to come together to break bread, and engage in the solemn services of public worship, and which was commonly known among them as "the Lord's day."

It may be necessary to remark, before concluding this topic, that although the Sabbath was instituted in Paradise, and was designed to be continued to the end of the world, still, in connection with the Hebrew commonwealth, it received various modifications, in accordance with the circumstances of the times. Observances and penalties were connected with it,—for example, the death penalty for its violation,—which had respect solely to the Jewish people. Of course, those additions passed away with the dispensation which gave them birth; while the original institution remains the same, and will continue to the end of time.

Our third general remark in relation to this subject is, that, under the Christian dispensation, the Sabbath is to be observed on the first day of the week. But here we shall be met, at once, with an objection. The Sabbath, it will be said, was instituted on the seventh day of the week; and the command in the decalogue requires the observance of the seventh day. If, then, this command is still binding, and the institution is perpetuated under the gospel, why is not the same day to be observed?

To this we answer, that neither the original institution of the Sabbath, nor the command in the decalogue, confines or fixes its observance to the seventh day of our week. God made the world in six days, and sanctified and blessed the seventh; but there is no certainty that this day corresponds to our seventh day, or Saturday, or that it corresponded to the seventh day of the ancient Jews. The command in the decalogue, also, requires us to labor six days, and to keep the seventh; but, as it does not fix upon any precise day from which the reckoning shall commence, it is impossible to determine, merely from this command, what particular day is to be observed.

The institution of the Sabbath obviously consists of two parts:

first, the appointing of one day in seven to be kept holy to the Lord; and, secondly, the fixing of a particular day to be observed. It is the first of these points which is settled in the original institution and in the fourth commandment. The second has been settled, from time to time, by other intimations of the divine will. The Sabbath began on the seventh day from the commencement of the creation, or on the first day after the creation of man. In the time of Moses, it was observed on the seventh day of the Jewish week. Under the present dispensation, the Sabbath is fixed, as I shall attempt to show, on the first day of our Christian week. Still, although the day may have been changed, for aught we know, more than once, the original institution, as expressed in the second chapter of Genesis and in the fourth commandment, remains unchanged, and will remain to the end of the world.

It may be objected, again, if the Sabbath is now fixed on the first day of our week, it ought to have been so fixed by some express command of Christ or his apostles. But such a command we nowhere find. It is admitted that we have no express command on this subject; still, it is believed that we have a *clear intimation of the divine will*, which has all the force and authority of a command. There were good reasons why our Saviour did not alter the time of observing the Sabbath, by an express command. He did not wish needlessly to disturb the feelings and prejudices of the Jews. It would have shocked them exceedingly, and caused a great and needless prejudice against the gospel, had they been told, in so many words, that their Sabbath was at an end, and that henceforth the institution was to be observed on the following day. This would have been putting new wine into old bottles; and the bottles, doubtless, would have burst, and the wine had been lost. But what could not well be effected by an express command was easily accomplished in a more silent and prudent way. The change was brought about gradually,—by usage and example, rather than by precept,—and when it came to be universal, the minds of all were prepared to receive it. It was thus that the necessary changes were accomplished, in regard to circumcision, the passover, and the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law.

These were not abolished by any express precept, but passed into a gradual disuse, as light was imparted to the minds of the people, and they were prepared to acquiesce.

Having thus freed the subject from some of the objections which embarrass it, we proceed to exhibit direct proof that the Sabbath is now to be observed on the first day of the week. And,—

1. It was on this day that our Saviour finished the painful, humiliating part of the work of our redemption. On this day he burst the bars of death, and rose triumphant from the dead. The Sabbath was originally instituted on the finishing of the work of creation, and with a view to commemorate its glories. But the work of redemption is a much greater and more glorious work than that of creation. We might anticipate, therefore, from what was done at the close of creation, that the resurrection of Christ would be celebrated with at least equal honors. We might expect, *à priori*, that the day for commemorating creative power and goodness would give place to one for commemorating redeeming love. Accordingly we find,—

2. That the apostles and primitive Christians uniformly assembled on the first day of the week for solemn religious purposes, and thus observed it as a Sabbath. On the first day of the week, the same in which he rose from the dead, Christ met his disciples assembled for religious purposes (Luke xxiv. 36). On the first day of the following week he met them again, assembled as before (John xx. 26). The day of Pentecost was always on the first day of the week (see Lev. xxiii. 15, 16); but on this day we find the disciples assembled "with one accord in one place" (Acts ii. 1). The first day of the week was the season, in the times of the apostles, when the word of God was preached, the Lord's Supper administered, and when charitable contributions were made for the poor. "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples," at Troas, "came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them" (Acts xx. 7). "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. xvi. 2). These instances are sufficient to show what was the practice of the

apostles in regard to this matter. And as they were guided by a divine inspiration, their practice is decisive.

3. The first day of the week was, in the age of the apostles, denominated the Lord's day. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. i. 10). The phraseology here imports that this was, at that time, the common mode of designating one of the days of the week; and we know, from other sources, that this was the first day. The first day of the week then was, by the apostles and primitive Christians, familiarly called the Lord's day,—a day consecrated and devoted to the service of the Lord. It was the Sabbath of the early followers of Christ.

4. The whole church, in the ages immediately succeeding the apostles, and (with few exceptions) in all ages since, has been united in observing the first day of the week as a holy day. Ignatius, a companion of the apostles, says: "Let us no longer observe Sabbaths" (meaning Jewish Sabbaths), "but keep the Lord's day, on which our Life arose." In the epistle ascribed to Barnabas it is said: "We observe with gladness the eighth day, on which Jesus rose from the dead." Justin Martyr says: "On the day called Sunday, there is an assembly of all who live in the city or country, and the memoirs of the apostles, and the writings of the prophets are read." One of the reasons which he assigns for the observance is, that "this was the day on which Christ rose from the dead." Irenæus says: "On the Lord's day, every one of us keeps the Sabbath, meditating on the law, and rejoicing in the works of God." The Council of Laodicea, convened A. D. 360, decreed that "Christians ought not to Judaize, or to rest on the seventh day, but preferring the Lord's day, they ought to rest as Christians."

These instances show us clearly what was the practice of Christians in the ages immediately succeeding the apostles; and, with few exceptions, such has been their practice in all periods since. We have, therefore, the sentiment of the whole Christian church on this subject, all declaring, as with one voice, that the Sabbath of the gospel is to be kept on that holy day on which the Saviour rose from the dead.

5. Under the gospel dispensation, God has owned and blessed the first day of the week as the Sabbath of his appointment.

In the original institution of the Sabbath, God not only sanctified the appointed day, but blessed it. And in the fourth commandment it is said: "The Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Accordingly we find, all along under the former dispensation, that blessings followed a faithful observance of the Sabbath, and curses came upon those who violated it. And if the Sabbath is still in existence, we may expect that God will own and bless it still. And he will bless, not a device of man, but the Sabbath of his own appointment. I ask, then, has not God blessed the Christian Sabbath, and thus set upon it the seal of his approbation? He blessed it by repeated appearances of the risen Saviour to his disciples on this day. He blessed it gloriously on the season of Pentecost. He blessed it by splendid and wonderful revelations, on this day, to the beloved disciple on the isle of Patmos. He has blessed it peculiarly and gloriously from that day to the present. On this holy day Christians have met their heavenly Father in their closets, and enjoyed, on their knees, the most precious manifestations of his love. On this day they have met him in their families; and, while engaged in the duties of private instruction and devotion, have found that his "favor was life, and his loving-kindness better than life." On this day they have met him in the sanctuary; and, while engaged in public worship, and in attending upon his word and ordinances, the heavens have been bowed, the Holy Spirit has come down, the hearts of Christians have been quickened and comforted, the hearts of sinners have been melted and broken, the church has been purified and increased, and the name of the God of Israel has been glorified. It cannot be doubted, surely, that God has owned and blessed the first day of the week, under the gospel, as the weekly Sabbath. By the bestowment of his promised blessing, he has set it apart and sealed it as the appointed day of holy rest.

Perhaps it will be said that he would have blessed the seventh day as much, if Christians had observed it with the same strictness. But facts do not justify this assumption. There were those in the primitive church, as the Nazarenes and Ebionites, who persisted in observing the seventh day, and would not give it up; but the blessing of God did not follow them, and they

soon came to nothing. So there are sects of Christians now, who insist on observing the seventh day; but they are few in number, and are always likely to be. The blessing of God has not rested upon them as upon other Christians, and their influence for good in the world has been very small. On the whole, we have abundant reason to be satisfied that, in setting apart the first day of the week as the Sabbath, we have the approbation of Heaven. This is emphatically the day which God has blessed.

In closing this discussion, it would be pertinent to show how and why the Sabbath is to be observed; but these points must be disposed of in the briefest manner possible. With respect to the manner in which the Sabbath is to be observed, I remark,—

1. We are to abstain from everything, on this day, which would be sinful on other days. What would be wrong and wicked at other times, surely cannot be right on the Sabbath.

2. We are to abstain, so far as possible, on the Sabbath, from all worldly thoughts and affections, and from worldly, secular reading and conversation.

3. We are to abstain ourselves, and restrain those under our care, from labor of every kind on the Sabbath. "In it thou shalt not do any work." To this prohibition there are but two exceptions. First, necessary works of mercy may be done on the Sabbath; such as preparing our food, taking care of children and domestic animals, providing for the sick, relieving the suffering and destitute, etc. And, secondly, such labor and travel may be lawfully performed as are necessarily connected with the public worship of God. "Have ye not read in the law how that, on the Sabbath days, the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath,"—by slaying and offering the sacrifices, and conducting the services of religious worship,—"and are blameless?" (Matt. xii. 5.)

4. A proper observance of the Sabbath involves a stated and faithful attendance upon the duties of public worship. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" (Heb. x. 25).

5. It is also necessary to a proper observance of the Sabbath, that we engage, diligently and heartily, in all the private

duties of religion and devotion. Our day of holy rest is not to be one of sloth and indolence.

Among the reasons for a faithful observance of the Sabbath, are the following:—

1. The express command and institution of God.

2. The example of holy beings. The first Sabbath was kept by the Omnipotent Creator and his holy angels. "The morning stars," on that day, "sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Our blessed Saviour and his apostles, and all holy men before and since the coming of Christ, have been faithful observers of the Sabbath.

3. The Sabbath is a day on which by far the greatest events which ever occurred in the history of our world are commemorated. The creation of the world, and its redemption! What events have ever transpired beneath the sun to be compared with these? What events so worthy of being appropriately commemorated?

4. A proper observance of the Sabbath is followed by the most important benefits,—to individuals, to families, to society in general, and to the world; benefits not only spiritual, but temporal,—relating not only to this world, but that which is to come.

5. I urge but another reason for a strict observance of the Sabbath, which is, that it is now so widely desecrated and profaned. Those who have not reflected on the subject can hardly realize to how great an extent the Sabbath is profaned, and how few there are in this wide world who endeavor to keep it according to the commandment. If we look into heathen and Mahometan countries, of course, we shall find no Sabbath there; unless it be in here and there a place which has been visited by missionaries. If we look into Roman Catholic countries, the state of things is little if at all better. And even among Protestants, especially in continental Europe, the holy Sabbath is awfully desecrated. Many deny altogether, and, in words, its divine authority, and others practically do the same. And in countries where there is a professed regard for the Sabbath, the regard, in too many instances, is little more than profession. It does not seem to be felt. It is scarcely exhibited.

Now these facts furnish no reason why we should give up the Sabbath, but a reason rather why we should hold on upon it with a firmer grasp. It is a precious institution,—a divine institution. It stands connected with the best interests of individuals and families, of the church and the world; and, if others are disposed to abandon it, we must hold it the harder. If others neglect and profane it, let us observe it with a stricter fidelity. By example, and precept, and every kind of personal influence, let us endeavor to restore it to its rightful position, and commend it to the observance of all around us.

LECTURE LIX.

THE CHURCH.

The word ἐκκλησια, church, is used in several senses in the New Testament. It is used to denote a popular assembly. "If ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful ἐκκλησια assembly" (Acts xix. 32, 39). This word is used in reference to the congregation of Israel, in the wilderness. "This is he that was in the ἐκκλησια, church in the wilderness" (Acts vii. 38). It is more commonly used, however, in one of the three following senses,—

1. To denote the real, invisible church of God, comprising the whole body of true believers, whether on earth, or in heaven. (See Heb. xii. 23.)

2. To denote particular visible churches, or those bodies of professed believers, who were accustomed to meet for public worship in one place; as the church at Jerusalem, the church at Antioch, the church at Rome, etc. This is by far the more common use of the word in the New Testament.

3. The word is also used, in a few instances, to denote the general, visible church, considered as embodying all the particular visible churches. (See Rom. xvi. 23; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Phil. iii. 6.)

God began to have a real church on earth as soon as there began to be truly pious persons; and he began to have a visible church as soon as these pious persons became in any way embodied, so as to render their piety,—their covenant relation to God,—visible. There was a church, and probably a visible church, before the flood. There were "the sons of God," in distinction from the "daughters of men." There were those who "called on the name of the Lord," in distinction from those who forgot and forsook him (Gen. iv. 26; vi. 2).

The form of government before the flood, and for centuries afterwards, both ecclesiastical and civil, was patriarchal. The head of a family, the ancestor of a tribe, was not only the civil ruler of those descended from him, or connected with him, but he was their priest. His household and dependents were his church, over whom he presided, and for whom, at stated times, he offered sacrifice. We have examples of this form of government in Noah, in Abraham, in Melchizedek, and Job. The visible church, at this period, had the weekly Sabbath and bloody sacrifices. Perhaps they had other rites, the knowledge of which has not come down to us. They had also frequent revelations from God.

The church, which was still patriarchal, received a written covenant, and at least one new and very significant rite,—the rite of circumcision,—in the time of Abraham. The covenant with Abraham was properly a church covenant; and circumcision is spoken of in the Scriptures as the visible "token of this covenant,"—"the seal of the righteousness of faith" (Gen. xvii. 11; Rom. iv. 11). By the transaction here referred to, the posterity of Abraham, or those of them who adhered to the covenant, were constituted a visible church, and the only church which, at that period, and for a long time afterwards, existed in the world. Accordingly, from this period, God begins to speak of himself as the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Israel, and of the children of Israel as, in a peculiar, covenant sense, his people. (See Ex. iii. 6, 7.)

The form of the church underwent another change in the time of Moses. New rites and ordinances were appointed,—partly commemorative and political, but chiefly of a typical character. The government of the church was also changed. From being patriarchal, it became theocratical and national. The children of Israel were no longer a clan, a tribe, but took rank among the surrounding nations. The design of the Mosaic institutions was not, however (as some may have supposed), to separate a people unto the Lord, which before had no covenant relation to him; but rather "to establish the children of Israel to be his people, as he had sworn unto their fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" (Deut. xxix. 13).

This church of Israel was that which existed all along under the former dispensation. It was the Zion of the Old Testament,—often chastised for its declensions, but never utterly forsaken,—and to which the promises of future enlargement were given.

From this ancient visible church, the great body of the Jews were at length broken off, for their unbelief and rejection of the Messiah, and the converted Gentiles were graffed into the same stock (Rom. xi. 17). The general visible church, under the gospel, is but a continuation and enlargement of the church of Israel. Christ "thoroughly purged the floor" of his church, but did not destroy it (Matt. iii. 12). He represents the converted Gentiles as sitting down in the same kingdom with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; while the children of the kingdom, the unbelieving Jews, are cast out (Matt. viii. 11, 12).[1]

After the death of Christ, however, the church experienced some important changes, adapting it to the new circumstances in which it was to be placed. It lost altogether its national, political character, and became more purely a spiritual body. The church general was henceforth to be composed of various particular or congregational churches,[2] existing in different nations and in different parts of the earth. Its visible rite were also changed. Those which were of a typical character, and had been fulfilled in the death of Christ, were removed; while others, more appropriate and significant, were appointed to take their place.

That we have a warrant in Scripture for the formation of particular or congregational churches there can be no doubt. Such were the churches everywhere established by the apostles and their assistant missionaries, and which were the principal objects of their watch and care.

It is not certain that these churches were, in all cases, formed after precisely the same model, or that we have any exact pattern, laid down in Scripture, according to which they should be formed. Some general outlines are clearly drawn for us, and these, so far as they can be discovered, should be strictly

[1] See also Rom. xi. 17-23; Eph. ii. 12, 19, 20; Rev. xii. 14.

[2] Using the word congregational in a general, and not a sectarian sense.

regarded; but in addition to these, God has wisely left many things, to be judged of and regulated according to circumstances. For example, the Scriptures direct that ministers of the gospel shall be supported; but they do not fix the amount of their salaries, or define the mode in which their salaries shall be raised. The Scriptures enjoin the duty of public worship; but they do not direct Christians where they shall meet, or at what hour of the day, or in what shape or form they shall build their temples. We shall search the Scriptures in vain for any inspired precept requiring or forbidding church organs, or church bells, or defining particularly the length, or the precise order, of the services of the sanctuary. We have the general injunction: "Let all things be done decently and in order;" but in what particular order many things are to be done is wisely left to the judgment of Christians.

The apostolic churches were all of them voluntary associations. The apostles had no compulsory power to bring men into the churches, nor did they desire any. All who joined themselves to any of the churches, did it freely, and of their own accord.

But although every church of Christ is, and of right ought to be, a voluntary association, still, every voluntary association is not a church. The peculiar characteristics of those early Christian associations, which went to constitute them churches, were the following:—

1. All the members were required to profess faith in Christ, and to give credible evidence of piety. It was those who were "pricked in the heart," repented, and "gladly received the word," who were admitted to the church, on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 41). It was not until the Samaritans "believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of Christ, that they were admitted to baptism and the church (Acts viii. 12). The Holy Ghost fell on the family of Cornelius, and satisfied Peter as to their piety, before he would admit them to the church, and administer to them the ordinances of the gospel (Acts x. 44–48). Ananias objected to baptizing Saul of Tarsus, until a voice from heaven assured him of the piety of this recent persecutor. "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to

bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts ix. 15). We here see what were the terms of admission to the apostolic churches, and what ought to be, and must be, the terms of admission to all the visible churches of Christ. A visible church is that which is visibly, or which appears to be, a branch of the real church. Consequently, a member of the visible church should be one who is visibly, or appears to be, a real disciple and follower of the Saviour. To say that a person can be a consistent member of the visible church, and not appear to be a member of the real church, is a contradiction in terms.

2. Those voluntary associations formed by the apostles, and by them denominated churches, not only consisted of professed believers in Christ, but they were formed on a peculiar basis; viz., that of the Holy Scriptures. In forming other voluntary associations, the members are guided by the particular object which they have in view; and they so form and adjust their constitution and laws, as will best tend to promote this object. But in establishing churches, all who would follow in the steps of the apostles must build entirely on the platform of the Scriptures. Their constitution and laws must conform to the Scriptures. All who become connected with the churches must be required to take the Scriptures as their rule and law. They must profess to believe whatever the Scriptures plainly teach, and promise to obey, so far as they are able, all that the Scriptures enjoin.

3. The object for which churches are formed and sustained is altogether of a peculiar character. It is not to promote any merely moral or secular end, but a spiritual end. The object of church organization is to maintain the worship and ordinances of the gospel; to promote by all proper methods, the edification of members; and to labor more effectively than would otherwise be possible, for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and the salvation of souls. A worthy and important object truly! An object, in reference to which the church is gloriously distinguished from all other associations existing among men!

It has been made a question whether particular churches

should have written creeds and covenants. That every church must have a covenant, written or unwritten, is very obvious. Otherwise the members would have no bond of union. There would be no mutual understanding or agreement between them. And if there must be a compact or covenant, expediency would suggest that it should be a written one, which could not be perverted or forgotton, and to which all the members might be permitted to appeal.

And the conclusion is much the same in regard to a written creed. It is certainly desirable that those who are to unite, habitually, in the most solemn acts of worship, should be agreed in the essential articles of their faith. And as every Christian, who believes anything, has a creed, so every society of Christians, which holds any articles of faith in common, has a common creed. The only question then is (and this can hardly be made a question) whether the creed shall be matter of public record, to which all concerned may have free access, and liberty of appeal, or whether it shall be left to uncertain tradition and forgetfulness.

Whether written creeds were in use in the age of the apostles, we are not informed. We know that they were common soon after the apostles; for several of them are still extant. Thus there is the apostles' creed,—a very ancient document, though not written by the apostles themselves. Besides this, we have the creed of Irenæus, the creed of Origen, the creed of Tertullian, the creeds of Gregory Thaumaturgus, and of Lucian the martyr; also the creeds of the churches at Jerusalem, at Alexandria, and at Antioch.[1]

A written creed is not to be substituted in place of Scripture, but should be regarded as a concise expression (adopted for the sake of convenience) of what is deemed to be the sense of Scripture. It is not itself the standard of faith, but a transcript, an epitome, of that infallible standard which God has given us in his word, and on which, as before remarked, the church must rest.

No church has a right to impose its creed upon others, but merely to propose it for consideration; leaving those to whom

[1] See Bingham's Orig. Ecc. book 3, chap. 2.

it is submitted at full liberty, either to accept it, and walk with that particular church, or to reject it, and walk somewhere else. In this view, I see no valid objection to written creeds and covenants, while the benefits of them are numerous and obvious.

Particular churches are independent of each other, in that each is a body by itself, as well as a member of the general body; and no one church, or collection of churches, has a right to exercise jurisdiction or authority over another church. In point of authority, the churches are equal and independent. No one is amenable to the bar of another. Each has a right to manage its own proper concerns, subject only to the law of Christ.

Still, churches should have communion and fellowship one with another in all suitable ways. They should watch over one another in love; pray for each other; receive each other's members and ministers; and be ready, on all occasions, to afford mutual assistance, and to give and receive advice.

Particular churches are independent of each other, in much the same sense that individual persons are independent. I have no right to exercise authority over my neighbor, nor he over me. I manage my own proper concerns in my own way, and so does he. Still, we maintain a mutual, friendly intercourse, and perform, in respect to each other, all the offices of neighborhood and kindness.

The independence of the particular church, in the sense here explained, is the peculiar characteristic trait of congregationalism. In the Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Methodist churches this independence is taken away. The particular churches are subject to a jurisdiction beyond themselves. In the Presbyterian connection, for example, the Presbytery can correct the decisions of a church; and the Synod can annul the decisions of the Presbytery; and the General Assembly can annul the decisions of all. But not so in the Congregational churches. Under Christ, all power is here vested in the church. Councils may be constituted, and may give advice; but this advice may be accepted or rejected. Councils can decide nothing for a church, unless where, by a previous act of the church, they are constituted a board of reference for the purpose.

It has become an established usage in our churches, that in case a member is aggrieved by the action of a church, he has the right of appeal to a mutual council; or if a mutual council be refused, an appeal may be had to an *ex parte* council; but neither of these councils can force their decisions on the church. They can only give counsel; and this counsel may be accepted or rejected. To be sure, if counsel is rejected, there may follow a breach of fellowship between the churches giving it and the church rejecting it; but each and every church still retains its independency, and is amenable only to its Divine Shepherd and Head.

That the churches were independent bodies for more than a hundred years after the death of Christ, we have the most incontestable proof. On this point, Waddington, an Episcopalian, says: "On the death of a President, or Bishop, or Pastor, the choice of a successor devolved on the members of the society. In this election, the people had an equal share; and it is clear that their right in this matter was not barely testimonial, but judicial and elective. This appointment was final, requiring no confirmation from any civil power, or any superior prelate; and thus, in the management of its internal affairs, every church was essentially independent of every other. The churches thus constituted and regulated formed a sort of federative body of independent religious communities, dispersed through the greater part of the Roman empire, in continual communication and in constant harmony with each other."[1]

Mosheim, a Lutheran, speaking of the churches in the first century, says: "All the churches, in those primitive times, were independent bodies, or none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other. For though the churches which were founded by the apostles frequently had the honor shown them to be consulted in difficult and doubtful cases, yet they had no judicial authority, no control, no power of giving laws. On the contrary, it is clear as the noonday, that all Christian churches had equal rights, and were, in all respects, on a footing of equality."

Speaking of the second century, Mosheim adds: "The form

[1] Ecc. Hist., p. 43.

of church government, which began to exist in the preceding century, was in this more industriously established and confirmed. One President or Bishop presided over each church, who was created by the common suffrages of the whole people. During a great part of this century, all the churches continued to be, as at first, independent of each other, and were connected by no consociations or confederations. Each church was a kind of little independent republic, governed by its own laws, which were enacted, or at least sanctioned, by the people."[1]

Archbishop Whately says: "It seems plainly to have been the practice of the apostles to appoint over each separate church a single individual, as chief governor, angel, bishop, or overseer; and each church, though connected with the rest by ties of faith, hope, and charity, seems to have been perfectly independent, so far as regards any power or control. The plan of the apostles seems to have been to establish a great number of distinct, independent communities, each governed by its own bishop, conferring occasionally with the brethren of other churches, but owing no submission to the rulers of any other church, or to any central common authority except the apostles."[2]

The testimony of Neander, Gieseler, and other approved historians, as to the ecclesiastical polity of the primitive Christian age, is altogether coincident with that above given.

It appears, from these testimonies, that the churches, in the age of the apostles, and for many years afterwards, were substantially Congregational. They were independent bodies. They must have been so, since, as Mosheim says, there were "no consociations or confederations" of any kind among them. It was the rise of Synods, which commenced in the latter half of the second century, which destroyed the original independence of the churches. If these Synods could have come together only for mutual consultation and edification, there would have been no objection. But they soon began to make laws for the churches, and to exercise authority over them. They became legislative and judicial tribunals, and the independence of the churches was taken away.

[1] Murdock's Mosheim, vol. i., pp. 86, 142.
[2] Essays on the Kingdom of Christ.

It appears, from this account of the matter, that the Congregational and Baptist churches of modern times are not justly chargeable with innovation in establishing the principle of church independency. They are merely returning to the usages of the apostles and their immediate successors. They are laboring to restore a principle which ought never to have been relinquished.

As to the powers and rights of the primitive churches, only a few words need be said. They had the right of admitting and excluding members. "When a vicious person," says Neander, "is to be excluded from the church at Corinth, the apostle regards it as something which must proceed from the whole church (1 Cor. v. 4). And when this same person, being humbled, is to be forgiven and restored, his restoration is to be effected by the same body" (2 Cor. ii. 7).

The first churches had the right of choosing their own officers; and this right they exercised even in presence of the apostles. Thus the church at Jerusalem chose their seven deacons; and the churches of Macedonia chose delegates to travel with Paul and his company, and carry their contributions to Jerusalem (Acts vi. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 19). This right continued to be exercised a long time in the churches. It was one of the last which was subverted by the usurpations of Popery.

The primitive churches had also the right of holding and managing their own property. It was to take charge of the property of the church, and see to its equitable distribution, that the order of deacons was first instituted (Acts vi. 3). And the deacons of Congregational churches now are constituted a legal corporation for the same purpose.

In short, every independent church, whether in the primitive age or in the present, may be said to have the right to dispose of its own proper internal concerns, subject only to the law of Christ. It has a right to do all that is necessary to be done, in order to preserve its own existence, and secure to itself the privileges and blessings of the gospel.

I close with a few words as to the privileges of church members. They have the privilege of being in covenant with God and his people, and of looking up to him as their covenant

Father in Christ. They have the privilege of the watch and care, the prayers and counsels, of their brethren. They have the privilege of coming to the special ordinances of the gospel, and thereby sealing their engagement to be the Lord's. They have opportunities of instruction and improvement which they could not have out of the church, and are surrounded with motives to strengthen and sustain them in the performance of duty, which they could not otherwise enjoy. Privileges such as these should not be slighted and trifled with by any of the hopeful children of God. Indeed, they cannot be trifled with, but with manifest guilt and detriment to the soul.

LECTURE LX.

THE OFFICERS OF A CHURCH.

It is a matter of general acknowledgment that there are two distinct offices in the church of Christ; viz., those of pastors or presbyters, and of deacons. Episcopalians add a third and higher office,—that of bishops. It belongs to the bishops, they say, each in his own diocese, to consecrate churches, to confirm and exclude members, to ordain ministers, and in general to administer the government of the church. And all this is attempted to be proved from the Bible. Let us look at some of the principal arguments by which the advocates of the theory undertake to support it.

1. An argument for the three orders of ministers has been drawn from the analogy of the Jewish priesthood. As there were among the Jews the high-priest, the priests, and the Levites; so among Christians, there should be bishops, presbyters, and deacons.

To this we have two replies to offer. In the first place, the priesthood in Israel was not designed to prefigure the gospel ministry, but rather the priesthood of the Son of God. The Jewish high-priest was a type of the great High-Priest of our profession; and the bloody sacrifices which he offered all looked forward to the atoning sacrifice of Christ. There is, properly, no priest under the new dispensation but the Lord Jesus Christ. To call a gospel minister a priest is a gross perversion and abuse of the term.

But, secondly, if the analogy of the Jewish priesthood were admitted, it proves too much for the Protestant Episcopalian. It proves the necessity, not of a bench of bishops, but of one prince of bishops, a Pope, who should be as highly exalted

above his brethren, as the high-priest in Israel was above the ordinary priesthood.

2. It is urged in favor of the order of bishops, that express mention is made of them in the New Testament. That bishops are spoken of in the New Testament is true; but it is certain, from a comparison of passages, that the terms bishop and presbyter are used interchangeably, as referring to the same office, and the same persons. Paul addresses his Epistle to the Phillippians, "to the saints which are in Christ Jesus, with the bishops and deacons." And when giving directions to Timothy respecting the qualifications of church officers, he mentions none but bishops and deacons (1 Tim. iii. 1). It is clear, from these passages, that there were no standing officers in the apostolic churches except bishops and deacons; and, consequently, that bishops and presbyters must be the same. And this conclusion is confirmed by a reference to other passages. Titus was left in Crete that he might "ordain elders in every city;" but in a following verse these elders are denominated bishops (Tit. i. 5–7). So in his valedictory address to the Ephesian elders, Paul speaks of these elders as επισκοπους, bishops (Acts xx. 28). The Apostle Peter also exhorts the elders to do the work of bishops, "not by constraint, but willingly" (1 Pet. v. 2). It is certain from these passages, that, in the language of the apostles, the terms elder and bishop denote the same office, and refer often to the same person.

3. It is further urged, in proof of the three orders of ministers, that these orders actually existed in the apostolic churches. These were the apostles, the presbyters, and deacons. With a view to perpetuate the higher order, the apostles ordained successors to themselves. Such were all the bishops in the primitive churches. And such, by an uninterrupted succession, are the bishops of our own times.

As this argument is the main pillar of Episcopacy, so far as it has any shadow of support from the Scriptures, it will be necessary to examine it at some length. In commencing the examination, let us endeavor to ascertain, so far as we may, the precise nature and character of the apostolical office. In doing this, we may consider the apostles in a twofold light; first, as

simple ministers of Christ; and, secondly, as ministers destined to a peculiar work, and clothed with peculiar authority and powers.

In the first place, the apostles were simple ministers of Jesus Christ. They were commissioned as ministers; and the commission which Christ gave them is that under which all his ministers have acted from that time to the present, and to which they continually appeal: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And as the apostles were commissioned like other ministers, so they often speak of themselves, and of one another, as mere ministers of Christ: "Let a man so account of us, as the ministers of Christ" (1 Cor. iv. 1). "Who hath made us able ministers of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iii. 6). They often speak of themselves, too, as in the rank of presbyters or elders: "The elders among you I exhort, who am also an elder" (1 Pet. v. 1). "The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius" (3 John 1). "The elder unto the elect lady" (2 John 1). In the light here presented,—as simple ministers of Jesus Christ,—the apostles have left successors after them. In this view, all Christ's faithful ministers may be regarded as in the succession of the apostles.

But the apostles were destined to a peculiar work, and were clothed with peculiar authority and powers; and in all that was peculiar to them, and which went to raise them above other ministers, it will appear that they have left no successors. Let us look at some of these peculiarities of their position and office.

(1.) The apostles received their commission directly from Christ, as no other ministers ever did.

(2.) The apostles were eye and ear witnesses of the life, the teachings, the sufferings, and resurrection of Christ; and it was a part of their official work, to bear witness of these things. Thus when Matthias was chosen to be an apostle, it was said: "One must be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts i. 22). Now, in this important part of their work, the apostles can have left no successors. No

succeeding ministers were witnesses, as they were; and, of course, none are in a situation to bear testimony.

(3.) As the first missionaries of Christ, and founders of the churches, the apostles have left no successors. Their very position and work, in this respect, gave them a degree of authority and influence in the church, to which no succeeding ministers can make any pretensions.

(4.) The apostles were inspired men, and, as such, were qualified to announce doctrines to the churches, and to enact laws, which should carry with them the authority of God. Here, again, they have left no successors.

(5.) The apostles were endowed, beyond others, with the power of working miracles; for they not only wrought miracles themselves, but could impart the gift to others, by the imposition of their hands (Acts viii. 15–20). Who has succeeded to them in this respect?

(6.) Not only had the apostles authority in the churches, as inspired men, but they could enforce their authority by inflicting judgments on the disobedient. Thus Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead, at the word of Peter; and Elymas the sorcerer was smitten with blindness, at the word of Paul (Acts v. 5; xiii. 11). To this fearful power with which the apostles were armed, Paul repeatedly alludes in his epistles: "If I come again, I will not spare." "Shall I come unto you with a rod," etc. (2 Cor. xiii. 2; 1 Cor. iv. 21). Here, again, the apostles are presented in a light in which they have had no successors.

It follows, from what has been said, that while, in the mere office of gospel ministers, the apostles have left successors,—every accepted minister of Jesus being, in this view, in the succession of the apostles; in all those things which went to distinguish them from other ministers, and confer on them a peculiarity and a superiority, they have left no successors. From the nature of the case, they can have left none. And if any will pretend to be the successors of the apostles, in their high and peculiar character,—in that which went to distinguish them from ordinary ministers; then let them prove their succession by something more than mere words. Let them show to the world that they really are what the apostles once were.

Have they received their commission, as the apostles did, directly from Christ? Were they eye-witnesses of his life, death, and resurrection? Have they a claim to authority and influence, as the first missionaries of Christ, and (under God) the founders of his church? Have they inspiration, and the gift of miracles, and the ability to impart the gift? Are they armed, like the apostles, with the judgments of heaven, and empowered to inflict judgments on the disobedient? In other words, are they what the apostles were? Have they succeeded to all, or to aught, of that, which went to give the apostles their peculiarity and authority in the church of Christ? If not, then let them boast no more about being the successors of the apostles. They can be successors of the apostles in none but the ordinary sense, as being simple ministers of Jesus.

If bishops, as a distinct and superior order of ministers, have succeeded to the apostles, then why, we ask, are they not called apostles? Why has the name of office been changed? These two names are not synonymous, nor were they ever so considered, in the church of Christ. An apostle is not a bishop, nor is a bishop an apostle. An apostle is a missionary,—a minister at large,—one who has, what Paul tells us he had, "the care of all the churches." A bishop has, or should have, a pastoral charge. He is the overseer of a particular flock. His attentions are confined to some particular field of labor. But to what particular fields of labor were the apostles confined? To what part of the Christian world did not their influence and authority extend?

It is evidence enough that bishops, in their alleged superior capacity, have not succeeded to the apostles, that they have not succeeded to the name of the apostles, nor to that which this sacred name imports. In short, they are not apostles, either as to the name or the thing.

4. It has been urged, in proof of a third order of ministers, that in his messages to the seven churches of Asia, our Saviour addresses an individual in each church, whom he calls its angel (Rev. chaps. ii., iii). But how do we know that this angel was a bishop? The words angel and bishop are not synonymous, nor have we any authority in the primitive age for using them

interchangeably. The probability is, that the angels of the seven churches were their pastors, or some leading individuals among their pastors. In most of the large churches, in the time of the apostles, there seem to have been several presbyters or elders. Such were the elders of the church at Jerusalem; and the elders of the church at Ephesus; and the "prophets and teachers" at Antioch, whose names are given in Acts xiii. 1. (See Acts xv. 6; xx. 17.) When these elders met together, as they often would, for consulation or devotion, they would need some one to be their moderator, or presiding officer. Such an officer we know was common in the next century, and was called the προεστως, or president of the church. It is not unlikely that this custom had been introduced before the close of the first century; and the presiding presbyter or elder may be denominated by our Saviour the angel of the church. Still, he was but a presbyter among his brethren, and not a minister of a higher order. This supposition is the more probable, since we are told that one of the presbyters of the Jewish synagogue—the one who officiated in offering the public prayers—was called "the angel of the congregation."[1]

5. It is further urged, in proof of the three orders of ministers in the church of Christ, that these orders prevailed in the ages immediately succeeding the apostles, and, with few exceptions, have prevailed in all periods since. The proper answer to this argument is a denial of the assumption on which it is based. The three orders of ministers did not prevail in the ages immediately succeeding the apostles. We have no mention of bishops, as an order distinct from presbyters, in any writing of the first century, or even of the second century, until near the close,—if we except the Epistles of Ignatius; and these have been so tampered with and corrupted, as to be no valid authority in the case. We speak advisedly on this subject, and challenge contradiction, if contradiction can be sustained.[2]

In the third and fourth centuries, when clerical usurpation had not only commenced, but had made alarming progress, bishops generally claimed to be a distinct and superior order of

[1] See Prideaux's Connection, Part i., Book 6, Sect. 4.

[2] See Chauncy, on Episcopacy, where this question is thoroughly investigated.

ministers. Still, they had not then the exclusive power of ordination, nor was it allowed by the more intelligent Christians, as Eusebius, Augustine, Jerome, and others, that the distinction between them and presbyters was of apostolic origin. Thus Jerome testifies that it had been the custom at Alexandria, for more than two hundred years after Christ, for presbyters to choose and to constitute their bishops.[1] And Eusebius affirms that in his day evangelists sometimes "ordained pastors."[2]

The manner in which the distinction between bishop and presbyter came into the church is pretty fully explained by Jerome, in his commentary on Tit. i. 6: "A presbyter is the same as a bishop; and before there were, by the instigation of the devil, parties in religion, the churches were governed by the joint councils of presbyters. But afterwards it was decreed, throughout the whole world, that one chosen from among the presbyters should be put over the rest, and that the whole care of the church should be committed to him." Jerome proceeds to support his opinion, as to the original equality of presbyters and bishops, by commenting on Phil. i. 1, and on the interview of Paul with the Ephesian elders, and then adds: "Our design in these remarks is to show, that, among the ancients, presbyter and bishop were the very same. But by degrees, that the plants of dissension might be plucked up, the whole concern was devolved upon an individual. As the presbyters, therefore, know that they are subjected, by the custom of the church, to him who is set over them, so let the bishops know that they are greater than presbyters more by custom than by any real appointment of Christ." In his Epistles to Evangelus and Oceanus, Jerome assumes and maintains the same positions as in the foregoing passage.

Augustine, bishop of Hippo, held the same doctrine. Writing to Jerome, who was not a bishop, he says: "Although, according to the names of honor which the usage of the church has now acquired, the office of bishop is greater than that of presbyter, yet in many things is Augustine inferior to Jerome."

"It is remarkable," says Gieseler,[3] "how long the opinion of

[1] Epis. to Evagrius. [2] Ecc. Hist., lib. iii. cap. 37.
[3] Ecc. Hist., sect. 30, Note.

the original identity of bishops and presbyters was retained in the church. Bernald, A. D. 1088, appeals, on this point, to the New Testament and to Jerome, and then proceeds: 'Since, therefore, presbyters and bishops may have been said anciently to have been the same, it is not to be doubted that they had the same power of binding and loosing, and everything else which is now peculiar to bishops.' Even Pope Urban II., at the Council of Beneventum, A. D. 1091, speaking of the sacred orders of deacons and presbyters, says: 'Since these only the primitive church is said to have had, concerning these alone we have a command of the apostles.'"

Indeed, this was the generally received doctrine of the Catholic church, insisted on by both canonists and schoolmen, until past the middle of the sixteenth century, when the opposite opinion was affirmed by the Council of Trent.

At the first dawning of the Reformation, the original parity of Christ's ministers was everywhere asserted. So taught Wickliffe, in the fourteenth century. So taught Luther, and Melancthon, and Zwingle, and Calvin, and the German and the Swiss Reformers. And what is more to the purpose, Cranmer, and Jewell, and Grindall, and Whitgift, and other founders and dignitaries of the present English Episcopal church, taught the same doctrine. Bishop Jewell says expressly, in his Remarks on Augustine: "The office of a bishop is above the office of a priest, not by the authority of Scripture, but after the names of honor which, through the custom of the church, have now obtained."

Bishop Burnet says: "As for the notion of the distinct offices of bishop and presbyter, I confess it is not so clear to me; and therefore, since I look upon the sacramental actions as the highest of sacred performances, I cannot but acknowledge that those who are empowered for them,"—as presbyters confessedly are, —"must be of the highest office in the church."[1]

Archbishop Usher, in his letter to Dr. Bernard, says: "I have ever declared my opinion to be, that bishop and presbyter differ in degree only, and not in order; and that in places where bishops cannot be had, ordination by presbyters stands valid."

Bishop Crofts says: "I hope my reader will see what weak

[1] Vindication of the Church of Scotland, p. 336.

proofs are brought for this distinction and superiority of order," between bishops and presbyters; "no Scripture, no primitive general council, no general consent of primitive doctors and fathers, no, not one primitive father of note, speaking particularly, and home to our purpose."[1]

Selden, the best read in ecclesiastical antiquity of any man of his time, and whom Grotius styles "the glory of the English nation," turned the doctrine of the divine right of bishops into jest.

Archbishop Bancroft is said to have been the first of the English Protestant clergy who insisted on the divine right of bishops; and even he, it would seem, did not hold this opinion constantly; for when it was moved, A. D. 1610, that the Scottish bishops elect might first be ordained presbyters, Bancroft replied that "there was no need of it, since ordination by presbyters was valid."[2]

Archbishop Laud, of persecuting memory, was a strenuous and consistent advocate of the divine right of bishops. He undertook the defence of this position while a member of the university, for which he received, it is said, a college censure. He persisted, however, in maintaining the doctrine, and had the happiness to see it prevail under his administration. It has been the belief of high-church Episcopalians, in England and America, from that period to the present.

We have now examined, so far as time will permit, the claims of our Episcopal brethren to their three orders of ministers; and we see that their arguments amount to very little. They do not prove the point for which they are urged. We fall back, therefore, with entire confidence, upon the doctrine of the New Testament, and the fathers of the first and second centuries, that there are but two orders or classes of officers in the church of Christ; the one having charge of its spiritual concerns, the other of its temporal concerns; the one commonly denominated bishops or presbyters, the other, deacons.

There are, indeed, circumstantial modifications of the general order of teaching officers in the church of Christ, and these are

[1] Naked Truth, p. 47.

[2] See Neal's Hist. of Puritans, vol. ii. 413.

indicated in the Scriptures by various names; as apostle, evangelist, pastor, teacher, bishop, presbyter, etc., but still the order itself is one. In the language of the schools, these modifications constitute differences in degree, but not in order. In like manner the general office of the gospel ministry is modified among ourselves. We have pastors, and missionaries, and theological professors, and evangelists; and yet the order, the office, is one. I make this remark, that we may be the better understood when we say, that there are, by divine appointment, only two orders or classes of standing officers in the church of Christ.

It is thought, by some, that the word presbyter or elder, as used in the Scriptures, designates two offices; viz., that of the teaching elder or minister, and the ruling elder. Thus Paul says: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they that labor in word and doctrine;" importing that there was a class of ruling elders who did not labor in word and doctrine (1 Tim. v. 17). But I doubt whether this passage implies any official distinction among the elders. In primitive times, as before remarked, there were usually several elders in a church. Among these, some would be more learned and gifted, more competent teachers, and more acceptable preachers, than others. On these, of course, the greater part of the labor of preaching would devolve. They would preach more frequently than their less qualified brethren. They would labor more "in word and doctrine." And while Paul would have all the elders, who ruled well, counted worthy of high honor, he would have special respect paid to those who labored more effectively "in word and doctrine."

We are confirmed in the belief that the apostle makes no allusion to a class of lay elders, in the passage under consideration, from the fact that no such officers are found in the church during the first four centuries after Christ.

Our Episcopal brethren consider deacons as one of the three orders of ministers, and that preaching is a part of their official duty. But we have no evidence of this in the original appointment of deacons, nor in the charge given to Timothy as to their qualifications (1 Tim. iii. 8–13). The first deacons were ap-

pointed, not to assist the apostles in preaching, but to relieve them of a burden of secular cares and duties, that so they might give themselves more entirely to the ministry of the word. (Acts vi. 1–4.)

There can be no doubt that the primitive deacons would do all in their power (as every Christian should), by conversation and exhortation, to promote the spread of the gospel, and lead sinners to Christ. Thus Stephen was employed, when arraigned and brought before the Sanhedrim for trial. Neither can it be doubted, that those who "used the office of a deacon well" were often promoted to the higher office. Thus Philip the deacon is afterwards spoken of as "Philip the evangelist." (Acts xxi. 8.) The probability is that he was constituted an evangelist previous to his visit to Samaria, and to his being engaged in preaching and baptizing there (Acts viii. 5–12).

Church officers should be officially qualified or constituted by ordination. This is according to the example of the apostles. It should be understood, however, that ordination, of itself, does not make a man an officer in a particular church. He must first be elected by the church, and must freely accept of the church's election. But ordination is a divinely authorized and prescribed form of investiture, of inauguration, to a particular office.

The first deacons were ordained. By the imposition of hands and prayer they were solemnly invested with the office of deacon (Acts vi. 6). And it deserves consideration whether deacons, in our own time, should not be set apart to their office in the same way.

Ministers of the gospel, too, should be ordained. Until they are ordained, they are not properly invested with the office of a minister, and qualified to administer the sacraments of the church.

Our Episcopal friends insist that bishops alone have the power of ordination; but in proving, as above, that bishop and presbyter denote the same office, we invalidate altogether this high claim. We have proof in abundance, both from Scripture and antiquity, that the prerogative of ordination belongs to presbyters. The presbyters at Antioch ordained Paul and

Barnabas (Acts xiii. 3). Timothy was ordained by "the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. iv. 14). Timothy and Titus, who were evangelists, are spoken of as being vested with the power of ordination (1 Tim. v. 22; Tit. i. 5). The presbyters at Alexandria, as Jerome informs us, were in the habit of ordaining not only one another, but their bishop, and that, too, for more than two hundred years.

Some have contended that churches have the right of ordaining their own ministers. And as an abstract right, to be exercised only in cases of extreme necessity, perhaps this may be admitted. Still, this is not the way in which church officers, as a general thing, should be ordained. In the New Testament, and in the early ages of the church, we find this work, invariably, performed by ministers. Indeed, it is properly committed to ministers, and should not be undertaken by others, except in cases of such extreme necessity as knows no law.

By the first settlers of New England lay ordinations were encouraged, and sometimes practised. But in this respect, our fathers verged, obviously, to the extreme of independency. And it is evidence of their wisdom, that though they retained the theory of lay ordination in their Platform,[1] they early banished the practice of it from their churches. Probably not an instance of lay ordination has occurred among the Congregationalists of New England during the last two hundred years.

[1] Cambridge Platform, chap. 9.

LECTURE LXI.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

The discipline of a church, in the larger sense of the term, includes all those principles and rules which are adopted, with a view to the purity, order, peace, and efficiency of its members. In a more restricted sense, church discipline has respect to that course of treatment which churches are called upon to pursue towards offending members; including instruction, warning, admonition, reproof, excommunication, etc.

The proper subjects of church discipline, then, in this sense of the terms, are offending members; those who have entered into covenant with the church, have placed themselves under its watch and care, and are known to walk in a disorderly manner. With such persons, the church is bound to have recourse to discipline. It is bound to take measures with them for their reformation or exclusion.

The power of discipline, at least in its ulterior stages, is lodged in the church. It is the duty of individual members to use the milder methods of warning and reproof; but when these fail, it belongs to the church, as a body, to convict, admonish, and exclude the offender.

This is the natural right of the churches. As it belongs to them to admit members, they ought to have the right, in case individuals become unworthy, to exclude them. And this right of the churches is expressly recognized in the New Testament. To the aggrieved brother Christ says: "Tell it to the church; and if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican";—a form of expression which clearly implies that it belongs to the church to hear and judge of the offence, to admonish, and (if need be) to exclude the offender (Matt. xviii. 17).

Paul, writing to the Corinthian church, says: "Purge out the old leaven;" and again: "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. v. 7, 13). He exhorts the Roman brethren to "mark those that cause divisions, and avoid them;" and the Thessalonians, to "withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly" (Rom. xvi. 17; 2 Thess. iii. 6). It is evident from these and similar passages, that the power of discipline is vested in the churches, and that on them rests the responsibility of maintaining it.

It has been objected to the views here presented, that our Saviour addressed the seven churches of Asia through their respective angels or ministers; and that these ministers were commended or reproved, according as they had been faithful or unfaithful in the work of discipline; implying that this was a work devolving especially upon them. In reply, I admit, that the angels of these seven churches were probably their ministers; but it is perfectly evident, from what our Saviour said to them, that his messages were designed, not for them as individuals, but for the churches over which they presided. The churches were addressed through their pastors. It was the churches which were commended or rebuked, according as they had been faithful, or the contrary. In some instances they are addressed in the plural number: "The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days;"—a singular form of expression to be used in reference to an individual.

The ends to be answered by church discipline are, first, the recovery of the offender, if this be possible. He has broken his covenant, has gone astray, and is in danger of perishing in his sins. His Christian brethren are bound to him by solemn covenant obligations; they deeply feel for him, and are ready to do all in their power for his recovery.

But whether they can recover the offender or not, they are bound to regard the second great end of discipline, which is the honor of religion, and the purity of the church. By the fall of a church member, religion is disgraced, and the church is injured; and there is no way in which the evil can be removed, but by the recovery of the offender, or his exclusion. He must

either make confession of his sins, and return to his duty, or he must be separated from the communion of the church. To these two great ends of discipline,—the recovery of the offender, if it be possible, or his exclusion from the church,—all the steps in a process of discipline should be directed.

It has been made a question, how far we are to regard the direction of Christ, in Matt. xviii. 15–17, as a rule of church discipline. I think it may be safely said, that the spirit of this rule should be regarded always; and the letter of it, so far as circumstances will allow. Except, perhaps, in cases of notorious and flagrant crime, or where the offender is quite out of the reach of his brethren, there should always be, in the first instance, private admonition. Let some suitable person go to the offender, in a private and friendly manner, tell him of his fault, and urge him to repentance and reformation. Let him, if need be, repeat this labor of love.

If the offence is known only to the laboring brother, and no sufficient proof of it can be adduced, this brother can deal with him only in a private way. He cannot with propriety or safety speak of it, or bring it before the church. If he cannot gain his brother by private admonition, he must leave him to the decisions of the judgment day. Nor may he, on account of his brother's delinquency, absent himself from the communion of the church. To do this, would be to commit an offence against the whole church, and expose himself to needless censure. Indeed, I can think of no offence or grievance, on account of which a professing Christian would be justified in turning away from the communion of his church, so long as he believed it to be a church of Christ, and he considered it his duty to remain connected with it.

But if the offence is not strictly private,—if it is susceptible of proof,—then, when the incipient steps have failed of their object, the case must be brought before the church. A written complaint should be lodged with the pastor, or presiding officer, with a request that it be laid before the church. If the church vote to receive and act upon the complaint,—as, in all ordinary cases, they should do,—a day is set apart for trial, when the complainant is to establish his charges, by proof. If the church

vote that the charges, or any considerable portion of them, are sustained, the offender is suspended from communion, and a written admonition is sent to him. If he does not "hear the church" in this, a second admonition is sometimes sent. (See Tit. iii. 10.) If this, too, be disregarded, he is now formally and solemnly excommunicated.

If the offender is dissatisfied with the decision of the church, he has the right, according to our usages, of appeal to a mutual council; and it is the duty of the church, in all ordinary cases, to unite with him in calling such a council, if he desires it. This council may be called merely to give advice; or it may be constituted, by the parties, a board of reference, to review and decide the case for them. It will be guided, in this respect, by the previous action of the parties, as expressed in their letter missive.

Should the request for a mutual council be rejected by the church, the dissatisfied individual may call an *ex parte* council, to look into his case, and give advice. It is to be understood, however, that this council has no right to dictate to the church, or to impose its decision upon it. It can only express an opinion and give advice, leaving the church at liberty to act, in view of the advice given, according to its own sense of propriety and duty. The *ex parte* council cannot restore the excommunicated person to his former standing in the church from which he has been ejected; although it may, in case he is thought to deserve it, afford him relief in some other way.

The satisfaction to be required of offenders is evidence of repentance; and this will be furnished by confession of sin, reparation (so far as possible) of injury, and reformation of life. While the offence is private, a confession may be private; but when the case has been brought before the church, or in any other way has become public, a public confession must be required. Nothing short of this can wipe away the dishonor done to religion, and remove scandal from the church. Every true penitent will wish his confession to be as public as his offence. He will be satisfied with nothing less than this. Still, due care should be taken, that the feelings of penitents be not needlessly wounded in cases of this nature, and that feelings of unkindness

and revenge, which, possibly, may be harbored against them, be not intentionally consulted and gratified.

Excommunicated persons should be considered, not as released from their covenant obligations, but rather as covenant-breakers. They should be regarded with feelings of sorrow and concern, and should be made the subjects of special prayer. Where any good is likely to result from such a course, they are to be avoided and shunned. They are to be denied the society and countenance of Christians, that they "may be ashamed." I see no good reason, however, for the scrupulousness which some have manifested, in refusing to eat with them, and in denying them the common courtesies of life. That eating with them, which is forbidden to Christians by the Apostle Paul, refers not, I think, to the common meal, but to the table of the Lord. "If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner," let such an one be put out of the church, as unworthy to sit with his brethren at the table of the Lord (1 Cor. v. 11).

I hardly need say, that it is incumbent on the church, and on all its members, to seek the good of excommunicated persons, and to be ready at all times to accept their penitence, to rejoice in their reformation, and to welcome them back to the bosom of the church.

In this short Lecture, I have only attempted to lay down some general principles to be our guide in the often difficult, and always painful, work of church discipline. In regard to particulars, much must be left to the discretion of pastors, and those who take a leading part in the work.

In our larger churches, I have thought that the appointment of a standing committee, whose official duty it shall be to look into all cases of alleged offence, to adjust them privately, if possible, or, if not, to bring them to the notice of the church, might be a measure both of duty and of safety. It would secure that the work of discipline should be more promptly done, and better done,—done, too, with less danger to the peace and harmony of the church.

I only add further, that this work of church discipline should be regarded, by all concerned, as a work of love. All who

have had much experience in it know that it is sometimes regarded differently. Those who undertake it are suspected and reproached, and the language of the Saviour on a very different subject is perversely applied to them: "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone." Now this, I hardly need say, is all wrong. There is no casting of stones in the case. Church discipline is, throughout,—and so it should be regarded by all concerned in it,—a work of love. In the spirit of love it should be undertaken, and pursued, and brought to its termination, whatever that may be. The church is no place in which to seek or take revenge. And those who endeavor faithfully to maintain the discipline of the church should not be accused or suspected of seeking revenge. When I wander, it may be insensibly, from the path of duty, my Christian brother can afford me no so convincing evidence of his love, as in taking me kindly by the hand, and endeavoring to lead me back. Such an one is trying, not to injure me, but, at a great expense of feeling on his part, is trying to save me. Surely his is, beyond almost any other, a work of love. Yet this is church discipline.

LECTURE LXII.

THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

The word sacrament is not in the Bible. Hence, in entering upon a consideration of the subject before us, it is important that the proper meaning of this word should be ascertained, and that the manner of its introduction into the current phraseology of Christians should be pointed out.

The word in question is from the Latin *sacramentum*, which, in classic use, has two significations. First, it denotes the sum of money which each of the parties in a suit at law was required to lay down, at the commencement of the trial, and which, being forfeited by the party beaten, was devoted to public uses. Hence, it was called *sacramentum*, a sacred deposit. Between this and the Christian use of the term, I can discover no affinity.

But, secondly, the word was used by the Romans to signify *jusjurandum*, an oath; and more especially an oath by which the Roman soldier bound himself to obey his commander in all things. In this sense, the word is used continually by Cicero, Cæsar, Livy, and all the best Latin writers. And many have supposed that the Christian use of the term was strongly analogous to this, and in fact borrowed from it; that in receiving the sacraments the Christian binds himself by oath to Christ, as the Roman soldier bound himself to obey his commander. But to this supposition we have two objections. In the first place, there is no evidence that the early Christians regarded themselves as sworn into the service of Christ, and bound to him by the solemnity of an oath, or that they ever used the word sacrament in such a sense. And, secondly, this supposition is contradicted by another view of the case, which is altogether more probable.

The peculiar, Christian sense of the word *sacramentum* was derived, not from either of its classical significations, but from the ancient Latin versions of the Bible. These versions began to be made very early; some of them in the apostolic age, and others at a later period. And when we look into these versions we find *sacramentum* used in altogether a peculiar sense. It denotes anything secret, recondite, incomprehensible, and is synonymous with the Greek, μυστηριον, mystery. In the sense of these old Latin versions, anything which might properly be called a mystery was a sacrament. Thus Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which was hidden from himself, and which Daniel revealed, is in the Vulgate repeatedly called a sacrament or secret (Dan. ii. 19). In place of Paul's language, "Great is the mystery of godliness," we have, in this version, "Great is the sacrament of godliness" (1 Tim. iii. 16). Also in Eph. v. 32, where Paul says of marriage, "This is a great mystery; but I speak of Christ and the church," the Vulgate has it, "This is a great sacrament," etc. In the Revelation, too, "the mystery of the seven stars" is rendered "The sacrament of the seven stars" (Rev. i. 20).

Why the early Latin translators of the Scriptures adopted this peculiar sense of the word sacrament, I pretend not to say. Of the fact that they did so, there can be no doubt. Now these Latin translations were the common Bibles of the first Latin fathers, as Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, and others; and these were the men who introduced the word sacrament into the phraseology of the church. Of course, they would use it in the sense in which they found it used in their Bibles. Accordingly we find Tertullian, when speaking of the doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation of Christ, calling them alternately mysteries and sacraments. Indeed, he, and some of the other Latin fathers, use the word sacrament to denote the whole Christian doctrine; just as Paul sometimes calls the doctrines of religion mysteries. "Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1).

The word sacrament is used by Tertullian, and by most of the Latin fathers, in reference to baptism and the Lord's supper,—

sacramentum aquæ et eucharistæ. Nor is it difficult to see how these rites came to be denoted by this term, in accordance with the sense which the fathers gave to it. For in both these rites there is an outward sign and the thing signified. There is the form of the rite, which is obvious to the sense, and the spiritual import, which is conveyed under it. Of course there is that which, to the uninstructed, uninitiated, is concealed, secret, and which, in the current language of the times, would be called mystery, sacrament. Thus Augustine says: "They are called sacraments, because that in them one thing is seen, and another is understood." (Serm. 265.)

But there is another reason why the word sacrament was employed to denote baptism and the Lord's supper, which probably had more influence. The Pagan priests were accustomed to celebrate the more sacred rites of their religion in secret, and to call them mysteries. In imitation of this practice, and with a view to make their religion more acceptable to Pagans, the Christian fathers early began to celebrate baptism and the Lord's supper in private. None were allowed to be present except the initiated, and the rites themselves were denominated the Christian mysteries or sacraments.

The word sacrament has undergone some change of signification since the times of the early Latin fathers. By all Christians, who use the word at all, it has come to be appropriated to the outward rites and forms of religion. To be sure, all Christians do not use it in reference to the same rites; but it is employed by all who use the word in any sense, to denote certain outward ritual observances. The question therefore arises, and it is an important one in this discussion, What is requisite to constitute a rite of our religion,—in the sense in which the word is now commonly used,—a sacrament?

Without particularly noticing everything which might be brought forward, in answer to this inquiry, it will be sufficient for my present purpose to remark,—

1. That in order to constitute a religious rite a sacrament, it must be one of divine institution. Neither the wisdom of man nor the traditions of the elders, nor any other mere human device, is sufficient to establish a Christian sacrament. To be

entitled to this distinction, an observance or rite must be an ordinance of Christ. It must be of divine institution.

2. A rite in order to be regarded as a sacrament of Christ, must be characterized by significance and appropriateness. It must not be an idle ceremony. It must have a meaning,—an important meaning; and this meaning must be sufficiently obvious to be understood. Otherwise it would not be a sacrament, in the sense of the old Latin fathers, as before explained; nor could it be regarded as an institution of Christ. Who could believe that Christ would appoint an ordinance in his church that was without meaning, or the meaning of which was so recondite, as to be calculated rather to puzzle and perplex his people, than to instruct and edify them.

3. An outward observance in order to be regarded as a sacrament, must hold an intimate and vital connection with the church. It must be included in the covenant of the church. It must be a rite of the church, and belong to it. The Christian sacraments, as the phrase is now understood (whether they be few or many), are all of them church ordinances. They are visible tokens (as circumcision was) of the church covenant. They belong to those, and those only, who are embraced in the covenant, and hold some connection with the church. They go to give visibility to the church. No rite which is not thus vitally connected with the church can properly be regarded as a Christian sacrament. Again,—

4. An outward rite, in order to be a sacrament of the church, must be one of universal and perpetual obligation. It must not be confined to the apostolic age, or to any other age. It must not be restricted to the Jews, or to any other people. Christianity was designed to be the religion of the world. The Christian dispensation is not to give place to any other, but is to continue to the end of time. Hence, the sacraments of our religion, being once instituted, are to remain. They are not to be superseded, or pass away. They are to be observed whenever and wherever the church of Christ is established. They are to prevail with the religion of Christ, all over the earth, and continue to the end of the world.

Having mentioned the several marks by which the Christian

sacraments are distinguished, it will not be difficult to decide as to the number of them, and which they are.

All Christians, who observe any outward rites, are agreed in considering baptism and the Lord's supper as sacraments. Protestants regard these as the only sacraments; while in the Church of Rome, five others are associated with them, making seven in all; viz., confirmation, ordination, auricular confession with absolution, extreme unction, and marriage.

I may remark in passing, that there seems to have been no dispute in the church, as to the number of the sacraments, nor any attempt to define and settle the number, until after the twelfth century. The discussion of this matter commenced among the schoolmen, and was settled, so far as the authority of one man could settle it, by Peter Lombard, in his four books of Sentences. The principal reason why he decided upon seven sacraments was, that seven is a sacred number; and of course, the sacraments must be presumed to be no more nor less than seven. In this decision, as in most other things, he was followed by the doctors of the Romish church; but the sacraments were not authoritatively determined to be seven until the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century.

But let us try the five additional sacraments of the Romish church by the distinguishing marks that have been laid down, and see if they will bear the test. The first of these is confirmation. But this fails at the very threshold. There is no evidence that confirmation, as practised in the Romish and Episcopal churches, is of divine institution. The passages relied on in proof of this point have not the remotest allusion to the subject. The apostles laid their hands on the new converts, and imparted to them the Holy Ghost in his miraculous influences. In other words, they imparted—as they alone had power to do—miraculous gifts (Acts viii. 17–19). But this was a different thing—most widely different—from confirmation as now practised.

The second of the Romish sacraments to be examined is ordination. This is, indeed, a rite of divine appointment; a significant rite; and one which is likely to be perpetuated. But does it hold the required connection with the church? Is it included in the covenant of the church? Is it to be given to all those

who come into the church? Does it go to give form and visibility to the church? These questions must all be answered in the negative. Of course, ordination fails in one of the requisite characteristics of a sacrament. It is a divinely appointed mode of investing a man with office in the church of Christ, but has no claim to be regarded as a Christian sacrament.

The third of the Romish sacraments is auricular confession; or penance, as it is sometimes called; or absolution. This is destitute of each and all of the marks of a sacrament. But it is enough to say of it, that it has no foundation in the word of God. We are required to repent of our sins; to confess them to one another, and to God; and to seek forgiveness at his hands. But we are nowhere required to confess them to a priest, submit to the penance he enjoins, and receive his absolution.

Another of the Romish sacraments is that of extreme unction. This is founded, professedly, on the following Scripture: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick" (James v. 14). Here is an authority, certainly, for an unction of the sick; but not for what the Romanists call extreme unction. The unction of the apostles was designed for the recovery of the sick; and, if accompanied with faith and prayer, had the promise of recovery. But the extreme unction of the Romanists is administered in the last hours of life, and is intended, not so much for the recovery of those who receive it, as to prepare them for approaching death. It is obvious, too, as the unction of the apostle looked to the performance of a miracle, it must have been limited to the age of miracles, and could not have been designed to be perpetuated in the church.

Still another of the Romish sacraments is marriage. This, we acknowledge, is of divine institution, and was designed to be perpetuated. Yet the rites attending it are nowhere prescribed, and it lacks entirely that connection with the church which is necessary to constitute it a Christian sacrament.

There is an injunction of Christ, which looks quite as much like instituting a sacrament, as either of those which have been

considered, and which some Christians have regarded in the light of a sacrament, although the Romanists have passed it over. "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John xiii. 14). Here would seem to be a positive institution, and a very significant one. But then, like marriage, it does not hold the required connection with the church; and it is evident, since we do not find it generally and statedly practised in the apostolic churches, that it was not designed to be perpetuated. The spirit of the injunction, no doubt, was intended to be regarded. Christians are bound to practise a mutual condescension, and should be ready to perform for each other, when circumstances require it, the humblest offices of kindness; but are not bound literally, sacramentally, to wash one another's feet.

We come back, then, from the foregoing examination, to baptism and the Lord's supper, as alone entitled to be denominated Christian sacraments. These have all the distinguishing marks of sacraments, as the word is now commonly understood. And as the Scriptures have nothing to say, in terms, about sacraments, it is only by their peculiar distinguishing marks that they can be known. Both baptism and the Lord's supper are of divine institution. We have the express words of their institution in the Scriptures. Both of them, too, are highly and obviously significant. Both hold the required connection with the church; so that they may strictly be denominated sacraments of the church. And both of them were designed to be perpetuated. Of the Lord's supper it is more than intimated that it is to continue in the church till the second coming of Christ (1 Cor. ii. 26); while the practice of the apostles, and of the church in all ages, proves that baptism with water is of perpetual obligation.

Here, then, we have two sacraments of the church, and only two. And these are to be observed according to the original institution, divested of all that rubbish of ceremonies which superstition has, at some periods, thrown around them.

Most of the important questions respecting baptism and the Lord's supper will be considered in the following Lectures. As to the efficacy of the sacraments, or the manner in which the

benefits of them are received, there is some diversity of opinion among those calling themselves Christians. In the Church of Rome, two things are set forth as indispensable to the efficacy of the sacraments: First, that the outward administration be rightly performed; and, secondly, that the intention of the officiating priest be rightly directed. Faith, on the part of those receiving the sacraments, so far from being made a condition of the blessing, is expressly declared to be of no account. The following is from one of the Canons of the Council of Trent: "If any man shall say that grace is not conferred by the sacraments themselves, but that faith alone is sufficient to obtain the grace, let him be anathema." Thus, to use the words of another, "the sacraments are converted into a sort of magical charm, which works in some mysterious way, without the concurrence of the patient; the exercise of the intellect and will, of the rational and moral powers within him, being entirely excluded." On this ground, the sacraments might be as efficacious to a person asleep, as to one awake; to a man bereft of reason, as to one in the full exercise of reason; to the ignorant savage, or the unrelenting malefactor, as to the most enlightened and devoted Christian.

But not only must the outward ceremony be rightly performed, the intention of the priest must be rightly directed; else there is no virtue in the sacrament. The very essence of the thing is wanting. This, obviously, must be a most perplexing condition to the Romanists; since when he goes to the sacrament, he can never be sure whether he has received it or not. The outward acts may all be rightly performed, but as to the intention of the priest, who but God can look into his heart, and know for a certainty what this has been? He may have intended something else, or his mind may have been diverted, so that he has had no particular intention about it; in which case, the right of baptism is not valid, and the eucharist is a mere empty form. On this ground, it may well be doubted whether there is now an individual in the Church of Rome, from the Pope down to the meanest of his vassals, who can tell, for a certainty, whether he has been baptized; or whether he has

ever partaken of what he conceives to be the body and blood of Christ.

Let the members of our churches be thankful that they are involved in no such frightful uncertainties. With us, the efficacy of the sacraments depends on no mere outward forms,—on no dubious intention of the officiating priest,—but upon the promised presence and blessing of the Saviour. And the simple condition of our receiving this blessing is faith on our own part,—holy, saving faith in the crucified Lamb of God. If we have faith in Christ when we approach the sacraments, we know that we shall be accepted and blessed. Christ will himself meet us at the baptismal font, or around the sacramental board, and grant us the tokens of his favor and love.

No two methods of salvation can be more diverse than salvation by the sacraments, and salvation by the atoning blood of Christ. The former is the hope of mere formalists, the world over; the latter is the hope of the evangelical Christian. In the church of Rome, salvation by the sacraments is fully illustrated. First, there is the sacrament of baptism, in which the infant is regenerated. Next, the sacraments of confirmation and the mass, in which the subject literally receives the Lord Jesus. All along through life, he has recourse, as occasion requires, to the sacrament of penance and priestly absolution. And to crown all is the sacrament of extreme unction. If an individual succeeds in securing all these, whether a believer or unbeliever, and whatever his character may be, he is sure of heaven. St. Peter has the keys, and a servant so faithful will never be rejected. Such is salvation by the sacraments;—one of the grossest impositions, the most fatal delusions, that the great destroyer of human souls ever palmed upon the world.

We have spoken of the perversions and abuses of the sacraments. The benefits of them are very great.

In the first place, they furnish an incontestable argument for the truth of Christianity. That these sacraments actually exist, in connection with the church of Christ, is a plain matter of fact, which no one can doubt; and now it devolves upon the infidel, no less than upon the Christian, to account for this fact. The Scriptures inform us of the institution, origin, and design

of the sacraments; but set aside this account, and who can give us any other? Reject the Scriptures, and who can form a probable conjecture as to the manner in which the sacraments originated?

This argument is the more conclusive, since the sacrament of the supper is of a commemorative character. It was instituted as a memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ. Admit the story of his sufferings and death, and everything relating to the ordinance,—its object, its form, its character, its history,—all are natural and consistent. But deny this account,—reject the Scriptures,—and who can tell how the sacrament of the supper should ever have been instituted; or, if instituted, how it could have secured so early, and so universally, the observance and the veneration of Christians? If we had no other argument for the truth of our religion than that drawn from the fact of the sacraments, this alone would be incontestable.

Another important benefit of the sacraments consists in their giving visibility to the church of Christ. Without the sacraments, there might be a covenant of grace; but having no visible token, it would be comparatively out of sight, and might be overlooked and lost. There might be Christians,—followers of Christ; but having no visible mark as his followers, they might soon be merged and mingled in the world. Christians little think how much they are indebted, in this view, to the sacraments; and how kind and wise it was in their covenant God to provide them. He gave significant visible rites to his church, under the former dispensation. Rites differing in form, but equally significant, he still continues to his church. And it is hardly likely that, without them, the church could have subsisted, as a distinct body, to the present time.

Other advantages, resulting from the sacraments, are even more obvious. As signs or symbols, they are full of good influences and blessings. The instructions they communicate, the invaluable lessons which they hold forth, might long ago have been lost to the world, had it not been for their mute but significant teachings. Or, if not wholly lost, the impression of these truths had been vastly diminished, and their moving,

constraining, sanctifying influence had been comparatively taken away.

The sealing virtue of the sacraments is, moreover, a great blessing to the people of God, as it furnishes them with new and increased motives to be mindful of their covenant engagements. They have bound themselves to be faithful, by solemn seals; and these seals are renewed, repeated, every time they come to the table of the Lord.

But the great benefit of the sacraments is that of which I have before spoken,—the presence of Christ in them,—that rich blessing from Christ which always accompanies them, when received in a humble, believing manner. In these ordinances of his own appointment, Christ meets his beloved people, smiles upon them, communes with them, and makes himself known to them in the breaking of bread. He imparts such tokens of his spirit and grace as they can find nowhere else. They obtain a fresh anointing from the Holy One. They receive nourishment and strength by which to run the Christian race, maintain successfully the Christian conflict, and come off conquerors at the last through him who hath loved them and died for them.

LECTURE LXIII

BAPTISM.

The word baptism, from the Greek βαπτίζω, properly signifies a washing; whether the substance washed be partially or wholly immersed in the liquid, or the liquid be applied to the substance, by running, pouring, rubbing, or sprinkling. There were "divers washings" (in the original baptisms) under the former dispensation; some of which were performed by bathing, but more by sprinkling or affusion (Heb. ix. 10).

Baptism, as a religious rite, is of great antiquity. It was practised, in connection with circumcision, on the admission of proselytes to the Jewish church, long before the coming of Christ. As the fact of Jewish proselyte baptism has been disputed, I will exhibit, briefly, the evidence on which it rests.

1. The baptism of proselytes appears altogether natural and probable, considering the genius of the Mosaic institutions, and the views which the Israelites were accustomed to entertain of the Gentile nations. Nothing was more common, among this people, than lustrations and purifications by washing or baptism. In these the external part of their religion in no small degree consisted. And as they considered the Gentiles to be altogether unclean, how natural for them to insist, when any of these came over to their religion, that they should be ceremonially purified by the application of water! We might infer, *à priori*, considering the peculiar customs and notions of the Jews, that they would require the baptism of Gentile proselytes.

2. That the Jews were familiar with the right of baptism previous to the coming of Christ, is implied in the question addressed to John, by those who were sent unto him from Jerusalem: "Why baptizest thou, if thou be not the Christ, neither

Elias, neither that prophet?" (John i. 25.) They did not ask, What new rite is this? but, Why do you administer it? Their language implies that they had been accustomed to the rite itself; but if John was "not the Christ, neither Elias, neither that prophet," they understood not why he had taken it upon him to baptize.

3. The Jewish rabbins, ancient and modern, bear testimony to the custom of baptizing proselytes. This practice is mentioned and enjoined in both the Talmuds. It is thus spoken of by Maimonides, a learned Jew, who flourished in the twelfth century: "In all ages, when a Gentile is willing to enter into the covenant of Israel, and place himself under the wings of the divine majesty, and take upon him the yoke of the law, he must be circumcised, and baptized, and bring a sacrifice; or, if it be a woman, be baptized, and bring a sacrifice."

4. Other ancient writers, besides Jews, bear testimony to the fact of their baptizing their proselytes. Thus Arrian, a heathen philosopher at Rome, A. D. 140, reproaches those who turned proselytes to the Jews, calling them the baptized ones. And Cyprian, a Christian father of the third century, says: "The case of the Jews, who were to be baptized by the apostles, was different from that of the Gentles; for the Jews had already, and a long time ago, the baptism of the law, and of Moses, and were now to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

5. The existence of such a rite as baptism among the Jews can hardly be accounted for, unless it be traced to a period anterior to the Christian era. We certainly know that they baptized their proselytes in the second century, and have continued to do so ever since. But how was this rite introduced among them? Was it copied from the Christians? Is it likely that, at so early a period, or at any period, the Jews, the most inveterate enemies of Christ, would copy one of his sacramental rites, and incorporate it among the institutions of their venerated lawgiver? To those who have any knowledge of Jewish prejudices, the supposition will appear incredible,—we had almost said impossible.

It follows, therefore, that the Jews must have received the custom of baptizing proselytes (as they profess to have done)

from the patriarchs of their nation, and that it was in common use among them at the coming of the Saviour.

The first mention of baptism, in the New Testament, occurs in the history of John the Baptist. It has been made a question respecting the baptism of John, whether it was properly a Christian ordinance,—the same as that instituted by Christ after his resurrection, and observed in the church in all periods since. My own opinion is, that the baptism of John was not a Christian ordinance, but rather an introductory rite, intended to prepare the way for the gospel dispensation. In this I agree not only with Origen, Chrysostom, and others in the ancient church, but with the most respectable writers, Baptist and Pedobaptist, of the present day. Chrysostom says: "The baptism of John was, as it were, a bridge, which, from the baptism of the Jews, made a way to that of the Saviour. It was superior to the first, but inferior to the second."[1] The following are some of the reasons urged by Robert Hall, and others, to show that the baptism of John was a preparatory rite, and not a Christian ordinance.

1. This baptism took place under the Jewish dispensation, which continued, in all its force and significance, until the death of Christ.

2. Christian baptism originated in the express command of Christ, issued after his resurrection: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 17). No such origin can be claimed for the baptism of John. He ascribes his commission to the Father (John i. 33).

3. The entire work of John, both his preaching and his baptism, was evidently preparatory. He came to "prepare the way of the Lord." He came to point out to the children of Israel their Saviour. "That he (Christ) should be made manifest to Israel, therefore, am I come baptizing with water" (John i. 31). Here John sets before us, explicitly, the design of his baptism; and certainly it was very different from that of Christian baptism.

4. John did not baptize in the name of the Father, the Son,

[1] Homily, 24.

and the Holy Ghost. This we know, because some who had received his baptism confessed that they had "not heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts xix. 2).

5. Some of those whom John had baptized were afterwards baptized by the apostles. This, in particular, was the case with certain disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus (Acts xix. 5). In all probability, it was the case with many others.

For all these reasons we think it demonstrable that the baptism of John could not have been Christian baptism, but was an intermediate, introductory rite, intended to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah and his kingdom. And the same may be said of the baptisms administered by the disciples of Christ previous to his death. They preached as John did: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord;" "The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and their baptisms were of the same character and design as his.

In my last Lecture, I spoke of baptism as one of the sacraments of the church. It is, as circumcision anciently was, a token of the church covenant (Gen. xvii. 11). It is a visible mark, by which all those who share the blessings of the covenant, or are in any way connected with the Christian church, are to be distinguished.

With regard to its import, baptism may be considered as both a sign and a seal. As a sign it signifies the cleansing of the soul from sin, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. In other words, it signifies regeneration. As circumcision shadowed forth, signified, the circumcision of the heart, so baptism signifies the regeneration of the heart. This regeneration of the heart is sometimes called a baptism of the Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit, or regeneration of the heart, is the inward grace, of which baptism with water is the outward sign.

But baptism is not only a sign, but a seal,—a seal of the covenant of the church,—in which sense it has a binding force. It binds the conditions and promises of the covenant, both ways. It binds the promises of the covenant to the believer, and binds the believer to fulfil his covenant engagements to be the Lord's. In this solemn ordinance, the person worthily receiving it

avouches the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be his God, and gives up himself to him to be his servant,—binding himself henceforth to live devoted to his service and glory.

The Christian community has long been agitated with an unhappy controversy respecting the mode of Christian baptism; the one part affirming, and the other denying, that a total immersion in water is essential to the ordinance. This, it should be kept in mind, is the precise question in dispute; not whether immersion is valid baptism; nor whether it has been frequently, and at some periods commonly, practised in the church; but whether it is essential to the ordinance,—so essential that there can be no baptism without it.

We take the negative of this question, and for the following reasons:—

1. The rite of immersion is not fitted, adapted, for universal practice. The health of ministers is often such as to render it unsafe for them to go into the water. The health of those desiring baptism is more frequently such as to render it unsafe, perhaps impossible, for them to receive the ordinance in this way. In some parts of the earth, and at some seasons of the year, it must be very inconvenient, if not impracticable, to administer baptism by immersion. Now, is it likely that our Lord, who intended that his religion should be universal, would append to it a rite, and make it essential, which was so ill-fitted for universal practice.

2. The signification of water baptism indicates the propriety of some other mode of administration besides immersion. As I have said already, the baptism of water is a sign, an emblem of spiritual baptism. It shadows forth, by an expressive symbol, the cleansing, purifying influences of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the mode of water baptism might be expected to correspond to the manner in which the Spirit is represented as descending upon the heart. But this is uniformly by pouring or sprinkling. "I will pour out my Spirit unto you." "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." This pouring out and sprinkling of the Holy Ghost is in Scripture called the baptism of the Holy Ghost; of which water baptism

is the instituted sign. It is very evident, therefore, that pouring or sprinkling must be proper, not to say the most proper, mode of applying water in baptism.

3. The original words used to denote the ordinance of baptism do not signify immersion exclusively. They admit of a wider signification. This is evident,—

(1.) From their etymology. They are derived from the Greek *βαπτω*, a word which it is now admitted does not invariably signify immerse. Mr. Carson, a learned Baptist writer, shows conclusively that this word signifies to dye, as well as to dip, and to dye or color in any manner. It is the word used in the Septuagint, where the body of Nebuchadnezzar is said to have been "wet with the dew of heaven" (Dan. v. 21). Certainly his body was not immersed in the dew.

(2.) The synonymes of *βαπτιζω* show that its signification is not confined to the idea of immersion. It is used interchangably with *λουω* and *νιπτω*, which properly signify to wash. To give but a single instance. The prophet Elisha sent a message to Naaman, saying, "Go and *λουσαι*, wash, in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean." And Naaman "went down, and *εβαπτισατο*, washed himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God" (2 Kings v. 10, 14). Evidently *λουω* and *βαπτιζω* mean the same thing here, and are used in the general sense of wash.

(3.) Accordingly we find that whenever the authors of our English Bible have translated the original words denoting baptism, they have uniformly given them the sense of washing. Thus the divers *βαπτισμοις*, spoken of in the Epistle to the Hebrews, are rendered "divers washings" (Heb. ix. 10). The Pharisee marvelled that our Saviour had not *εβαπτισθη*, been baptized before dinner. Here again the word is rendered washed (Luke xi. 38). "And when they come from the market, except they *βαπτισωνται*, be baptized, they eat not; and many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the *βαπτισμους*, baptism of cups, and pots, and of brazen vessels, and of tables" (Mark vii. 3, 4). In both these instances the original word denoting baptism is rendered in the same way.

Frequently, when our translators have transcribed (and not

translated) the words in question, they have connected them with particles which show that they intended to use them in the general sense of washing. This is true in all those cases in which persons are said to be baptized with water, and with the Spirit. No English scholar would say immerse with water.

It should be remarked, too, that our English translators used the original words in this way, not because they had any prejudice against immersion and in favor of sprinkling; for in King James's time immersion was the more common mode of baptism in the Church of England. They used the original words as they did, because the sense and connection obviously required it.

(4.) The most respectable lexicographers, ancient and modern, concur in giving to the Greek words denoting baptism a wider signification than that of simple immersion. In proof of this, I may refer to Stephanus, Scapula, Passor, Suidas, Hedericus, Coulon, Parkhurst, Ainsworth, Schleusner, and Wahl. Indeed, Mr. Carson, after announcing his position that βαπτιζω "always signifies to dip," admits that he has "all the lexicographers against him;"—a strong indication that his position is untenable.

(5.) But that which is most decisive in regard to the meaning of the words denoting baptism, is their use. They are certainly used by authors, sacred and profane, in other senses beside that of immersion. They are so used in the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, and so transcribed by our English translators. (See Ecclesiasticus xxxiv. 25, and Judith xii. 7.) They are so used by the early Christian fathers. Origen represents the wood over which water was poured, at the command of Elijah, as having been baptized. Cyprian, Jerome, and some other of the fathers understood the prediction, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," as having reference to water baptism (Ezek. xxxvi. 25). The "baptism of tears and of blood," which was a favorite expression with the early fathers, utterly precludes the idea of immersion.

The words denoting baptism are used in the New Testament where they cannot signify immersion. Thus, in a passage already quoted, we read of "the baptism of cups, and pots, and brazen

vessels, and of tables" (Mark vii. 4). Possibly the "cups, and pots, and brazen vessels," may have been immersed in washing; but is it likely that the Jews immersed their tables,—or rather the κλινων, couches, on which they were accustomed to recline at meals? Then we have the baptism of the whole congregation of Israel "in the cloud, and in the sea" (1 Cor. x. 2). Whatever the mode of this great baptism may have been, we are sure that the Israelites were not immersed in the sea; for we are told expressly that they "went through it on dry ground" (Ex. xiv. 22).

I have dwelt the more largely on the signification of the disputed words, because much of the controversy obviously rests here. If βαπτιζω has but one meaning, and that is invariably immerse, it might seem that baptism should be, in all cases, by immersion. But if this word has a more general signification, carrying with it the idea of washing, cleansing, purifying, etc., without shutting us up to the idea of immersion, then baptism may be lawfully administered in other modes besides immersion.

4. The circumstances of several of the baptisms recorded in the New Testament indicate some other mode besides immersion. Without going at length into a consideration of all these baptisms, let me ask any impartial person to contemplate the baptism of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost; or the baptism of Paul, in the peculiar situation in which he was placed; or the baptism of Cornelius and his family, when the apostle said, "Can any man forbid water," *i. e.*, that it should be brought; or the baptism of the jailer and his household by one of his prisoners, in the midst of an agitated and affrighted city, and at the dead hour of night; and in whatever mode he may think these different persons were baptized, he will find it difficult to satisfy himself that they could have been immersed.

5. Immersion was never considered as essential to baptism till subsequent to the Reformation from Popery. We say essential; for this, it will be remembered, is the point in dispute. That immersions were frequent in the ancient church,—more frequent at some periods than any other mode,—I have no doubt. But at times when immersions most generally prevailed, the sick

were always baptized in some other mode, and such baptisms were considered as perfectly valid. A question was propounded to Cyprian, about the middle of the third century, "whether they are to be esteemed right Christians who have been only sprinkled with water, and not washed or dipped;" to which this venerable bishop replied, that in case of necessity, "the sprinkling of water is of equal validity with the laver." Cave says, that "the ancient Christians did not hold sprinkling to be unlawful, especially in cases of necessity, or where convenience of immerging could not be had." Calvin tells us, that "the substance of baptism being retained, the church, from the beginning, enjoyed a liberty of using somewhat different modes." Dr. Wall, who had a partiality for immersion, says: "On extraordinary occasions, baptism, by affusion of water on the face, was by the ancients accounted sufficient baptism. Of this," he adds, "there are many proofs." I might here cite a long list of persons, reaching from the third century to the sixteenth, who were baptized in other ways besides immersion; but it is not necessary, since it is admitted by Mr. Robinson, and other learned Baptist writers, that, "before the Reformation, sprinkling was held valid in cases of necessity."

We see, then, that the doctrine of exclusive immersion, as now inculcated by our Baptist brethren, is a novelty in the church. Such was not the doctrine of the ancient church at any period, and was not known or held till the rise of the Anabaptists in Germany, soon after the reformation from Popery.

It has been made a question whether baptism in any case should be repeated. The opinion of the church has been that it should not be.

1. Because regeneration, of which baptism is a sign, is not repeated.

2. As a seal of the church covenant, it should not be repeated. The seal of the covenant, once applied, needs not to be applied again.

3. As an initiatory rite, by which persons become connected with the visible church, baptism should not be repeated. One initiation is enough.

4. A repetition of baptism upon the same subject, is at best a taking of the name of the triune God in vain.

These remarks apply only to cases where the fact of baptism is unquestionable. Cases sometimes occur where it is doubtful, both to the subject himself and to others, whether he has been baptized. Under such circumstances it will be prudent to administer baptism; more especially if the subject desires it.

The question may be asked, whether baptisms administered in the Romish church, or in Unitarian and Universalist churches, are to be regarded as valid. This inquiry resolves itself into another; viz., Is the church in which the questionable baptism was administered to be regarded as a true church of Christ? Baptism is an ordinance of the church. It is to be administered in the church, and by one who is a proper minister of Christ. Is then the Romish church a church of Christ? and are its priests or ministers ministers of Christ? I think not. Of course I do not regard the Romish baptisms as valid. And the same rule may be applied to Unitarian and Universalist congregations. Those who do not regard these as proper churches of Christ, nor their teachers as Christian ministers, will not, of course, respect the validity of their baptisms.

I only add, that differences of opinion respecting the mode of baptism, which exist among evangelical Christians,—those who are agreed on all essential points of doctrine, experience, and even of church government,—should be treated with much candor and liberality. The day of retort, reproach, and bitterness we hope is past and gone forever. We may have our preferences as to a particular mode of baptism; but where persons truly respect the ordinance, and religiously observe it according to their understanding of it, we ought not to exclude them from our fellowship and confidence because their opinion may differ from our own. They do what they think the law of Christ requires, and to their own Master they should stand or fall.

For myself, I prefer pouring or sprinkling to any other mode of baptism. I do so, because it is a convenient mode, and because it shadows forth, more significantly than any other, that of which I conceive baptism to be the outward sign; viz., the outpouring of the Spirit, and the renewal of the heart. Still, if any

of our Christian brethren prefer immersion, by all means let them be gratified. Immersion is certainly an ancient mode of baptism; it was at some periods the common mode; and I can not only extend to my brother thus receiving the ordinance, the right hand of fellowship, but should be quite willing, if requested, to administer it to him myself.

LECTURE LXIV.

SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

The proper subjects of baptism are,—

1. Those unbaptized adults, who give satisfactory evidence of piety. That the apostles required a profession of piety in those adults whom they admitted to baptism is very evident from the sacred writings. Thus Peter said to the large company of inquirers on the day of Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus." And it was those only who "gladly received the word" who were baptized at this time (Acts ii. 38, 41). It was when the Samaritans "believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God," that "they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts viii. 12). When the eunuch requested baptism, Philip told him, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts viii. 37). Ananias was divinely assured of the piety of Saul of Tarsus; and so was Peter of the piety of Cornelius and his family, before those persons were admitted to baptism (Acts ix. 12; x. 47). The Lord opened the hearts of Lydia and of the jailer, and brought them to the exercise of true repentance, before they and their households were baptized (Acts xvi. 14, 33). While Paul abode at Corinth, many of the inhabitants of that city "believed and were baptized" (Acts xviii. 8). The testimony of Scripture on this point is uniform and abundant, all showing that before any adult person could be received to baptism by the apostles, he must make a creditable profession of piety. He must give satisfactory evidence that he was a true believer in the Son of God.

2. In addition to the class of persons here referred to, it is

believed that children, under the care and government of pious, covenanting parents are to be baptized. As this is a disputed proposition, it will be necessary to examine it with care.

It will be thought, perhaps, that the passages already quoted —those in which faith and repentance are spoken of as necessary in order to baptism—are in direct contradiction to the practice of baptizing children. But of whom are faith and repentance spoken of as necessary in order to baptism? Not of infant children, but of adult persons,—those who are capable of faith,—those who come to the ordinance on their own account. The passages above quoted touch not the case of little children at all. They do not refer to them. They decide nothing as to the right of children to baptism, one way or the other.

That the children of believing, covenanting parents are entitled to baptism, may be shown from various considerations.

1. This duty is reasonable in itself, and is in accordance with our best affections. In the children of those we love we all naturally feel a peculiar interest. A good prince would wish, and would provide, that the children of his beloved and faithful friends should be placed in a near relation to himself. And is it not reasonable to suppose that the Prince of Life has something of the same feeling,—that he will grant tokens of peculiar favor to the children of his covenant people? Accordingly we find,—

2. That in all God's covenant dealings with men, in former times, he has shown favor to the children of those whom he has taken into covenant with himself. Thus it was in the covenants with Noah and Abraham and David. God dealt favorably with the children of Lot for their father's sake. When the congregation of Israel stood before the Lord to enter into covenant with him, he commanded that their "little ones" should come with them (Deut. xxix. 11). He declares himself to be a God keeping covenant with those that love him, to a thousand generations. Such has been the course of God's covenant dealing with his people in former ages. How unlikely that he has swerved from it in gospel times, and sundered the connection before subsisting between believing parents and their children!

3. Had children been deprived of their interest in the cove-

nant under the gospel, believing Jewish parents in the primitive church would certainly have complained. In the days of the apostles many thousands of the Jews believed, who were all zealous of the law. They were tenacious even of their former burdens; and would they silently relinquish their accustomed privileges? Would they relinquish so great a privilege as that of having their children connected with them in the covenant of the church? Yet we hear not a word of complaint from any Jew on the subject. There was no objection to the gospel by friend or foe, on this ground. It is morally certain, therefore, that, in respect to covenant relations and privileges, the children of believers under the gospel "were as aforetime" (Jer. xxx. 20).

4. It is a conclusive argument in favor of infant baptism, that baptism is now substituted in place of the ancient circumcision. That baptism has come into the place of circumcision, we think susceptible of the fullest proof.

(1.) Baptism is now, what circumcision was formerly, an instituted prerequisite to a regular standing in the visible church. The visible church has been the same, under both dispensations. Christ did not destroy or abandon the Zion of the Old Testament and build upon its ruins a new gospel church. But he "thoroughly purged his floor" (Matt. iii. 12). He purified his church. He broke off the unbelieving Jews from their good olive tree, and grafted the Gentile believers upon the same stock (Rom. xi. 17). Circumcision was necessary in order to a standing in this visible church under the former dispensation, as baptism is now. In this respect, baptism has come in the place of circumcision.

(2.) Baptism is now, what circumcision formerly was, the visible token of the church covenant. The covenant of the church, like the church itself, has been the same under both dispensations. It has been under both the covenant with Abraham. This covenant has never been abolished. It is spoken of in the Old Testament as everlasting, and in the New as to exist forever (Gen. xvii. 7; Luke i. 55). It is represented by Paul as a covenant of "promise," as "confirmed of God in Christ;" and we are assured that "the law, which was

four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul" it, and render it of no effect (Gal. iii. 17). Believers under the gospel are spoken of as children of the covenant with Abraham (Acts iii. 25). It is on account of their interest in this covenant that they are so often denominated "Abraham's seed," and that Abraham is represented as "the father of all them that believe" (Gal. iii. 29; Rom. iv. 11). In short, the covenant with Abraham, as to the substance of it, has been the covenant of the visible church, under both dispensations. Of this covenant, circumcision was the ancient token, and baptism is the present token. In this respect we see that baptism has come in the place of circumcision.

(3.) Baptism and circumcision are of the same general import. Circumcision was both a sign and a seal. As a sign it represented the circumcision of the heart, or regeneration. "Circumcision is of the heart," says Paul; "in the spirit, and not in the letter" (Rom. ii. 29). As a seal, circumcision confirmed "the righteousness of faith," or the covenant of grace (Rom. iv. 11). Baptism, too, is both a sign and a seal. As a sign, it signifies "the washing of regeneration," or the baptism of the Holy Ghost. As a seal, it binds both the conditions and the promises of the covenant of grace. We thus see that, when circumcision was taken away as the initiatory rite of the church and the token of its covenant, baptism, a rite having the same general import, was substituted in its place.

(4.) The Scriptures countenance the idea that baptism is substituted in place of circumcision. "Beware," says Paul, "of the concision; for we"—we who have been baptized—"are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit" (Phil. iii. 2, 3). Again, "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism" (Col. ii. 11. 12). In other words, Ye are circumcised, having been baptized. To be sure, the circumcision and baptism here spoken of are both spiritual. But if the two ordinances are spiritually the same, and the one was instituted in the church on the removal of the other, is not this a substitution of the one for the other?

(5.) The Christian fathers considered baptism as having come in the place of circumcision. Justin Martyr says: "We have not received this carnal circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision, and we have received it by baptism. It is allowed to all persons to receive it in the same way." In another work attributed to Justin, the question is asked: "If circumcision be a good thing, why do we not use it, as well as the Jews?" To which the father replies: "We are circumcised, by baptism, with the circumcision of Christ."

The question of Fidus to Cyprian and the Council of Carthage, whether it be lawful to baptize an infant sooner than the eighth day, necessarily supposes it to have been an established opinion that baptism had come in the place of circumcision. On no other ground could such a question have possibly arisen. In his reply Cyprian says: "Christ has given us baptism, the spiritual circumcision."

Basil says: "A Jew does not delay circumcision, for fear of the threatening, that every soul that is not circumcised the eighth day shall be cut off from his people; and dost thou put off this circumcision made without hands, which is performed in baptism, when thou hearest the Lord himself say, Except one be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?" Several of the early fathers (like Basil in this instance) speak of baptism as "the circumcision made without hands," quoting the language of Paul in Col. ii. 11. This shows that they understood the apostles as teaching the substitution of baptism in place of circumcision.[1]

But if baptism has taken the place, in the church, of the ancient circumcision, and if such was the understanding of the apostles and their immediate successors, then the question about baptizing infants should be regarded as settled. There certainly was a command to circumcise infants; and if baptism has been substituted for circumcision, the same command is valid in favor of their baptism.

5. The Jewish proselyte baptism furnishes another argument for the baptism of children. It was shown in my last Lecture

[1] Those who would verify the above quotations from the fathers, may consult Wall's History of Infant Baptism, vol. i. chaps. 2–4.

that at the time of our Saviour's appearance, and for ages previous, the Jews had been accustomed to baptize their proselytes. And they always baptized children with their parents. Consequently, when our Saviour gave the command, "Go ye and teach," disciple, proselyte, "all nations, baptizing them," etc., his disciples must necessarily have understood him to intend that kind of baptism to which both he and they had been accustomed; viz., the baptism of children with their parents. How could they have understood him in any other way? Under these circumstances, the disciples needed no express command to authorize the baptism of children. They rather needed an express prohibition, in case the practice was to be discontinued. But such prohibition we nowhere find. It was never given.

6. Our Saviour and his apostles taught and practised just as we might expect they would do, on supposition they intended that children should be baptized; and just as we should not expect on the contrary supposition. In order to determine what we might or might not expect of Christ and his apostles, it will be necessary to keep in mind the established customs of the age in which they lived. In the Jewish church, children had always been connected with their parents, and early received the token of the everlasting covenant. Also the children of proselytes were connected in covenant with their parents, and entitled to the initial rites of circumcision and baptism. And now what might be expected of Christ and his apostles, on supposition they intended to put an end to this state of things? Not silence, surely. Silence would be a virtual indorsement of it. On this supposition they would have lost no opportunity of insisting that the ancient covenant connection between parents and children was abolished, and must no longer be recognized in the rites of the church. But did they pursue a course like this? Never, in a single instance.

What, then, might be expected of Christ and his apostles, on supposition they intended that the existing covenant connection between parents and children should be continued? Not, indeed, that they should enjoin it by express precepts; for this would be to enjoin expressly what every one already understood and practised. But they might be expected often to allude,

with approbation, to this covenant connection, and to drop expressions which implied it. They would be likely, also, as occasions presented, to baptize households, when those at the head of them made profession of their faith. And this, I hardly need say, is the course which our Saviour and his apostles actually pursued. Christ approved the practice of bringing infants to him, to receive his blessing, and declared that "of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke xviii. 15). He spoke of little children being received in his name, or as belonging to him (Mark ix. 37, 41). Peter taught believing parents, that the promise was to them and to their children (Acts ii. 39). Paul affirms that "the blessing of Abraham,"—an important part of which consisted in the covenant connection of his children,—"has come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ" (Gal. iii. 14). He also calls the children of a believing parent holy,—that is, dedicated, consecrated to the Lord (1 Cor. vii. 14). Paul repeatedly baptized households, on the profession of parents, or of those who had the charge of them. Lydia believed, and she and her household were baptized. The jailer believed, and he and all his were baptized straightaway (Acts xvi. 15, 33). He also baptized the household of Stephanas (1 Cor. i. 16). Such is the manner in which Christ and his apostles taught and practised in reference to this subject; and, to my apprehension, it is precisely what might have been expected of them, on supposition they intended that the existing covenant connection between parents and children should be continued.

7. The testimony of history is conclusive, in favor of infant baptism. It has been observed already that the Christian fathers, from Justin downwards, considered baptism as having come in the place of circumcision. This fact shows what their opinion must have been in regard to the question of infant baptism. Irenæus, who was in the second generation after the apostles, speaks expressly of baptized infants. Tertullian, a little later, although he advises delay in the case of infants and unmarried persons, yet refers to infant baptism as a prevailing and established practice. Origen, who was born within eighty-five years after the death of the Apostle John, and was de-

scended from Christian ancestors, who must have lived in the apostolic age, speaks repeatedly and expressly of infant baptism, and declares that it had come down from the apostles. Subsequent to this period, infant baptism is mentioned often, and in the most positive terms, by all the principal Christian fathers, as Cyprian, Optatus, Basil, Gregory, Ambrose, Jerome, Chrysostom and Augustine. It is recognized in the acts of councils, as well as the writings of individuals. It is represented as resting on apostolical example and authority. Indeed, infant baptism was rejected by no one in the primitive church, if we except some classes of heretics, who rejected all water baptism. Pelagius was accused of denying infant baptism, but he repelled the charge with indignation. "I never heard of any," says he, "not the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants; for who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized, and born again in Christ, and so make them miss of the kingdom of God?"

Dr. Wall, who has so thoroughly investigated the history of infant baptism as to leave little to be done by those who come after him, and to whom I am indebted for the above authorities, assures us, that the first body of men, of whom he can find any account, who denied baptism to infants, were the Petrobrussians, a sect of the Albigenses, in the former part of the twelfth century. And Milner says that, "a few instances excepted, the existence of antipedobaptisms seems scarcely to have taken place in the church of Christ, till a little after the beginning of the Reformation from Popery."

Such, then, is the history of infant baptism; and the argument from this source in favor of the divine origin and authority of the practice is deemed conclusive. If infant baptism does not rest on the ground of apostolic example, how can it be accounted for, that it should have been introduced so early into the church, and prevailed so universally, and that, too, without a whisper of dissension, or a note of alarm? We have catalogues extant of all the different sects of professing Christians, in the first four centuries,—the very period when infant baptism must have been introduced, if it were not of divine original. Yet there is no mention made of any sect, except those

which denied water baptism altogether, who did not consider infant baptism as a divine institution. Is it not certain, then, that infant baptism is a divine institution;—that it is not an innovation, but was sanctioned by the apostles themselves?

Will it be said in reply, that infant communion prevailed as early and as universally in the church as infant baptism? But this is not true. We hear nothing of infant communion, till the time of Cyprian, about the middle of the third century. We know when, and where, and for what reason, this latter practice was introduced; and there was no pretence, ever, that it had come from the apostles.

It may be inquired here, whether baptized children are members of the visible church. My own opinion is, that although such children sustain a peculiar and important relation to the church, and may be said to hold a covenant connection with it, still this connection does not amount to membership. Certainly, they are not members in full communion, and subject, as such, to the discipline of the church.

Baptism is an instituted prerequisite to membership in the church of Christ, but it does not, of itself, constitute membership in any case. Adult persons must be admitted to the church by vote, in addition to their baptism, or they do not become regular members. And the same is true of those who are baptized in infancy.

It may be inquired, further, whether baptized children sustain the same relation to the Christian church that circumcised children did to the Jewish church. We think not precisely the same. Owing to the national character of the Jewish church, the children sustained a sort of political connection with it, which does not now exist. The Jewish children, however, were not, at the first, members in full communion. They were not admitted to the Passover till they arrived at a certain age. Our Saviour's parents took him with them to the Passover, at the age of twelve years, "according to the custom of the feast" (Luke ii. 42). The most respectable commentators decide that this was as early as the Jewish children were permitted to be present on such occasions. Dr. Gill, an eminent Baptist writer, says: "According to the maxims of the Jews, persons were not

obliged to the duties of the law, nor subject to its penalties, until, if females, they were at the age of twelve years and one day; and if males, at the age of thirteen years and one day. They were not reckoned adult church members, till then; nor then either, unless worthy persons; for so it is said, 'He that is worthy is called, at thirteen years of age, a son of the congregation of Israel; that is, a member of the church.'"[1]

Of the import and design of infant baptism, I propose to treat in my next Lecture. Let me say, in conclusion, that the question of infant baptism does not rest, as some suppose, on the interpretation of a few doubtful passages in the New Testament, but goes to the very constitution of God's church, and requires to be studied and settled there. In the church of old were children connected in covenant with their parents, and was the token of the covenant applied to them? And are the church and its covenant the same under both dispensations? How, then, is the inference to be avoided or resisted, that the children of church members now are connected in covenant with their parents, and that the visible token of the covenant, baptism, should be applied to them?

The right of children to baptism, I repeat, lies in the very constitution of God's church. Assume this right, and everything pertaining to the church is plain and consistent, from one end of the Bible to the other. But deny this right, together with those facts and principles which are necessarily involved in it, and the two Testaments can no longer be harmonized, nor can the New Testament be made consistent with itself.

[1] Commentary on Luke ii. 42.

LECTURE LXV.

IMPORT, DESIGN, AND USES OF INFANT BAPTISM.

In my last Lecture, I endeavored to vindicate the propriety of infant baptism, and to show that it is of divine institution. But if this rite is of divine institution, it doubtless has a meaning, which may be gathered from the Scriptures, and which ought to be distinctly understood. Until it is understood, the duties growing out of it will not be known, and consequently will not be performed.

It has been observed already that baptism, like circumcision, is both a sign and a seal. As a sign, it is significant of important truths. As a seal, it is connected with a covenant,—requiring duties to be performed, and promising important blessings. This is true of baptism generally; and it is equally true of baptism when applied to children. It will be necessary to contemplate infant baptism in the twofold light which has here been presented. And first, as a sign. What is signified in the baptism of children? What facts, what truths, is the ordinance calculated to teach and impress?

1. It plainly teaches that infants are moral beings, and capable of receiving spiritual blessings. Some there are, who regard infants as little more than mere animals, without intelligence, perhaps without souls, having no moral capacities or character more than the brutes. But if infants are without intellectual and moral qualities, without souls, why are they baptized? What propriety in baptizing a mere animal? For such an application of the ordinance, what meaning or reason could be assigned? When our Saviour was upon earth, little children were brought to him, that they might receive his blessing. But can we suppose that he would have suffered mere

animals to be brought to him in this way? Would he have laid his hands on little animals, without souls, and prayed over them, and pronounced them blessed, and said that "of such is the kingdom of God"? (Luke xviii. 16.)

2. We see, in the baptism of infants, that they are depraved beings. Evangelical Christians have always held to native as well as total depravity; and this truth is clearly set forth in the baptism of little children. Why are they baptized for the remission of sins, if they have none?—was the triumphant interrogation of Augustine to Pelagius. And the question is equally pertinent and unanswerable now, as then. The application of water in baptism denotes purification. But why purify that which is not defiled? Why apply baptismal water to those who are in no way the subjects of pollution? Some there are who call infant children "little innocents," and think them fit subjects of baptism because they are innocent. But if they are innocent, they need no spiritual cleansing, no purification; and why should the symbol of purification be applied to them?

3. The baptism of infants, like that of adults, sets forth the cleansing of the soul from sin, by "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." This ordinance does not indeed import that all those to whom it is applied are regenerated in heart, more than circumcision imported that all who received that were circumcised in heart; but it does import that there is cleansing for them in the gospel, and that this is to be effected through the special operations of the Holy Spirit. "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts xxii. 16). "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean" (Ezek. xxxvi. 25). Whenever we see a little child baptized, we have a striking illustration of the glorious truth that, although we are "estranged from the womb," polluted from our birth, still there is cleansing for us in the gospel. There is "the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." There is an Almighty Spirit, by the shedding forth of whose influences the darkened mind may be enlightened, the stubborn will bowed, the depraved heart purified, and the whole soul transformed into a meetness for heaven.

4. Infant baptism is a significant token of discipleship, affixed

to those who are early consecrated to Christ, and pledged to him as his future followers. All societies need some mark of distinction, by which the members shall be known to each other and to the world. This mark or sign should be public, unequivocal, solemn, significant, established by authority, and acknowledged by all the members. Now, the sign of discipleship in the school of Christ is baptism, and our gracious Master has provided that it shall be given not only to his actual followers, but to their children. He has required that the children of his people should be brought to him for his blessing, committed to his instruction, and pledged and devoted to his care and service, and that the token of discipleship should be placed upon them. In this view, what an interesting spectacle is the baptism of a little child! A young immortal, just placed in the hands of its earthly guardians, is publicly resigned back to the guardianship of Christ; and he is represented as taking it into a covenant relation to himself, and fixing upon it the token of his faithfulness and love.

Having thus contemplated infant baptism as a sign, and glanced at some of the great truths which it is fitted to teach and impress, let us next consider it as a seal.

A seal implies the existence of a compact or covenant, and serves to ratify or bind such covenant. In the case of an adult, baptism is the seal of a covenant between God and the person receiving it. It seals to him the divine promises of pardon and salvation, and seals his engagements to be the Lord's.

In the case of an infant, baptism does not seal a covenant between God and the infant; for an infant is incapable of personally entering into covenant, or of engaging in any covenant transaction. But baptism in this case is the seal of a covenant between God and the parent respecting the child. If we look into the Bible, we shall find this covenant in both parts of it—its promises and its requisitions. It is, in fact, no other than the covenant of the church,—the covenant with Abraham. God promises Abraham in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." We find similar promises in other parts of the Bible. "I will pour

my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring" (Is. xliv. 3). "They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them" (Is. lxv. 23). "The promise is to you, and to your children" (Acts ii. 39). It is indubitable, from passages such as these, that the promises of the covenant extend to the children of believers. They extend to them as truly as to their parents. God promises to be the God of the one as really as of the other.

It will be observed, however, that these are covenant promises, and are connected with requirements to be fulfilled on the other part. There are requirements for the believer to fulfil in respect to himself, or he is entitled to no promise on his own behalf. So there are requirements for him to fulfil in respect to his children, or he can plead no promise for them. "Walk before me, and be thou perfect, ... and I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." "I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment" (Gen. xviii. 19). "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God is a faithful God, keeping covenant and mercy to them that love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations" (Deut. vii. 9). "When thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, the Lord thy God shall circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed" (Deut. xxx. 6). "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known unto their children, ... that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (Ps. lxxviii. 5). "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them" (Ps. ciii. 17). "The generation of the upright shall be blessed" (Ps. cxii. 2). "The just man walketh in his integrity, and his children are blessed after him" (Prov. xx. 7). "Train

up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. xxii. 6).

From these passages, out of the many which might be quoted, the import of the covenant may be gathered. God promises to be the God of believers, if they will be faithful to themselves; and he promises to be the God of their children, if they will be faithful to them. If they will walk before him and be perfect, he promises to establish his covenant with them, to be a God to them and to their seed. If they will command their children and their households after them, he promises that they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. If they and their posterity will continue in his love, he promises that his mercy shall descend, from parent to child, to a thousand generations. If they will return unto the Lord, and obey his voice according to all that he commands them, he promises to circumcise the heart of their seed, that they may love him with all the heart. If they will make known unto their children the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and the wonderful works that he has done, he promises that they shall set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. If they will keep his covenant, and remember his commandments to do them, he promises that his righteousness shall descend to children's children. If they will sustain consistently the character of the upright, their generation shall be blessed. If they will be just, and walk in their integrity, their children shall be blessed after them. If they will train them up in the way they should go, when they are old they will not depart from it. Or, to sum up these various, multiform scriptural representations, if covenanting parents will be faithful to their children, and train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, he promises to bestow upon them converting grace, and to be their God and portion in this world and forever.

Such is the obvious meaning of the covenant of the church, in its bearing upon children;—a meaning, not put upon it for the purpose of sustaining a favorite hypothesis, but shining out from all the Scriptures relating to the subject. When the believing parent enters into this covenant, he engages to be faith-

ful to his children, and he seals the bond, the engagement, in their baptism.

Such, then, is the import of infant baptism, as a seal. It is the seal of a covenant between God and the parent. It is a visible confirmation of the covenant by both the parties concerned in it. God virtually and most graciously addresses the parent in this transaction, and says: "I will be a God to your child, if you will be faithful to it." And the parent virtually responds: "I engage to be faithful to the child. I here publicly give it up to thee, and promise to train it up for thee."

From the view here taken the relation of the baptized child to the church is very obvious. It is not indeed, at present, an actual church member. Still, it holds an important relation to the church—an important place in its covenant. Both the requisitions and promises of the covenant have respect to it. The parent consecrates the child to Christ, and promises to train it up for Christ, according to the tenor of the covenant. And God condescends to say: "This do, and your child is secured to Christ and his church forever." The child, therefore, though not yet an actual member, belongs to the church by promise. It is promised to the church; and the promise, unless annulled by parental unfaithfulness, will sooner or later be fulfilled.

It may be asked here, whether the covenant of the church, in its relation to children, demands entire fidelity of the parent; whether it is broken by every instance of improper treatment, —by every failure in point of duty? In reply we would ask, Does not God demand entire fidelity in all his covenant dealings with men? In what covenant that he has ever made with them, has he left them at liberty to sin? Could Abraham fall into sin, and not violate that covenant in which it was said, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect?" Whenever the children of Israel fell into sin, were they not charged with violating covenant engagements? And is it not an aggravation of the sins of God's people now, that they are offences not only against the law of God, but against his covenant?

It is one thing, however, to come short of the entire requisitions of a covenant, and quite another, so to break it, and trifle

with it, as to lose all interest in its promised blessings. The former is often done by the professed people of God; the latter, it may be hoped, is of rare occurrence. It cannot be supposed that Abraham was entirely perfect with his children,—that he performed all his duty towards them. Yet he obtained a promise for them: "They shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment." The Israelites often failed of fulfilling the demands of God's covenant with them; yet it was long before they lost all interest in the covenant, and were finally rejected. And so it is with believers under the gospel. They are not perfect. They are often chargeable with sin. Still, they do not, with every sin, lose all interest in the covenant of grace. If they "repent of their sins, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance," he graciously returns to them, and permits them to confide in his love.

Without doubt, the covenant into which the believing parent enters, respecting his children, requires him to be faithful to them. It can require no less. Neither is it likely that any parent, in this life, comes up to the full import of this requisition. The most watchful parent often sins, and fails of doing his whole duty to his children. Still, he may not so fail and trifle with the obligations of the covenant as to forfeit all interest in its blessings. If he is sensible of his failures, and mourns over them, and strives not to repeat them, and returns with new zeal to the performance of duty, God will not forsake him, or cut him off from his interest in the promises. The whole history of God's covenant dealing with men forbids such a supposition.

The covenanting parent, having once failed, may not be able to demand the entire fulfilment of the promises; but he may reasonably pray for their fulfilment, and hope for it; and this hope will be the stronger, in proportion to the degree of his penitence and humility, the earnestness of his prayers, and his future diligence in the performance of duty.

Perhaps it may be thought that, in the foregoing statements, we represent the salvation of children as depending rather on their parents than themselves. But this is not true,—at least, in any objectionable sense. The piety of children, we do sup-

pose, is connected in covenant with parental fidelity; but then, when they come to exercise it, to experience it, it is their own piety. And they are rewarded according to their own works. So the final impenitence and ruin of children are connected, in many ways, with the wickedness of parents. Still, the impenitence of such children is their own; and they are punished for their own sins.

The principles which have been established furnish ground for several important conclusions.

1. The baptism of children is most wisely adapted to secure their religious education and consequent conversion. This is, in fact, the great object and end of infant baptism; and the rite, as it has been explained, is fitted, obviously, in the best manner to secure it.

It does this, by reminding covenanting parents of their duty to their children. Every time they look upon them, and behold the seal of God upon their foreheads, they are reminded of the engagements into which they have entered, and the duties which they have covenanted to perform.

Infant baptism also furnishes new and increased motives to parents, to strengthen them in the performance of their duty. In this respect, it is very like to a public profession of religion. A public profession imposes no new duties. The same religious duties, in the general, are binding on all men, whether they make a profession or not. But a profession furnishes new inducements to the performance of duty, and new strength with which to resist the many temptations to neglect it. So infant baptism imposes no new duties. All parents are bound to be faithful to their children, whether they baptize them or not. But by a public recognition of parental duties, and a solemn, sealed engagement to perform them, infant baptism greatly increases the motives to their performance, and furnishes additional security that they will not be neglected.

Then the promises of the covenant will be a great encouragement to parents, in the responsible work of training up their children. As the believing parent looks upon his beloved offspring, with an ever-watchful anxiety for their spiritual good, how it will encourage and comfort him, that he may regard

them already as the subjects of promise, and may humbly plead the provisions of God's gracious covenant on their behalf.

2. There is a propriety in administering baptism, not only to the natural children of believing parents, but to such as have been adopted by them, and with whose training and instruction they are entrusted. Infant baptism, we have seen, is the seal of a covenant between God and the parent, respecting his child. The covenant engagement of the parent is, in substance, this: "I will train up this child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." It is plain that the parent may enter into such an engagement respecting his own children; and it is equally plain that he may enter into a like engagement, in respect to any child or children whom he has adopted, or with whose education he is entrusted. With the utmost propriety, therefore, he may present such child or children before God, and say: "Here are the little ones whom thou, in thy righteous providence, hast committed to my care. I desire to yield them up to thee, and promise to train them up for thee. I desire to seal this promise in their baptism, and thus take hold of thy gracious covenant on their behalf."

3. It may be inferred, from the principles which have been established, that children are not entitled to baptism on their parents' account, after they have passed the period of their minority, or have passed from under the parental roof. As parents cannot with propriety engage to train up their children for God, when they are already trained up, or when their training has passed over to other hands, so they cannot with propriety apply to them the seal of such an engagement. The period when children cease to be entitled to baptism on the account of their parents, is when they pass from under the control of their parents, and are no longer subject to their authority and care.

4. It appears, from all that has been said, that infant baptism is no unmeaning ceremony, but a solemn, significant, and important ordinance of the church. Those who reject this ordinance usually think and speak of it as a thing of no value. "It is a cause that produces no effect; a means connected with no end; a cloud that affords no rain; a tree that yields no fruit."

But in view of all that has been said, we must be allowed to

ask, Is this true? Is infant baptism of no benefit as a sign? Is it not clearly significant of some of the most important spiritual truths? Where can we so plainly read that we are morally polluted beings from our birth; that we need cleansing; and that there is cleansing for us in the gospel? And is it of no benefit to the church and the world that Christ has appointed a standing symbol, an ordinance, in which these and the kindred truths of salvation are shadowed forth? Was it no benefit to the church, in the days of Pelagius, that she could appeal triumphantly to infant baptism in opposition to the errors which then prevailed? Is it of no advantage to the church, in these days, that she still retains the same argument?

But infant baptism is full of meaning and interest, not only as a sign, but as a seal. It is the seal of a solemn covenant between God and the parent. It binds the parent, by everything sacred, to be mindful of the spiritual interests of his children, and to do all in his power to train them up for heaven, and seals the consequent gracious promise that God will be their portion forever. And now is not a covenant so framed and sealed calculated to have an important influence? Will not those parents who have sincerely entered into it be more likely (other things being equal) to engage with persevering diligence in the important work of religious education, than those who have made no such engagements? And will not God remember his covenant, and bless their labors, and cause the fruits of them to appear?

I am far from considering infant baptism as a saving ordinance, or from attaching to it any mysterious efficacy in the concern of salvation; but if it stands connected with the religious education of children, and brings them within the scope of the promises, in the manner we have seen, then baptized children may be expected to enjoy privileges beyond others, and will be more likely to become objects of the divine favor and blessing. And this view of the case, I am confident, is justified by facts. The church has been, in great measure, perpetuated in the line of children who have been religiously educated, and chiefly from among those who have been circumcised or baptized. A large proportion of those who are converted and gathered into

the churches in our own times are from among this class; and so it has been in all former periods. And when we consider the import of infant baptism, the promises sealed by it, and the influence which it ought to have on those who practise it, there is nothing strange in all this. The wonder rather is that the value of the rite in question has not been more manifest, and that the faithfulness of God in respect to it has not been more signally, illustriously displayed.

The subject of this Lecture is one of great interest to ministers and to the churches at all times,—and very specially at the present time. We are expecting great things of the rising generation. We are expecting a vast accession to our churches, to be taken chiefly from those now in the morning of life. It is high time, then, that the relation of baptized children to the church should be accurately understood, and the duties growing out of it faithfully performed. It is time that the hearts of the fathers were turned to the children, and that the hearts of al professing Christians were engaged together to seek the salvation of the young; that when those now upon the stage of life are summoned to leave it, a generation may rise up, to stand in their lot, to enter into their labors, and carry these labors forward to a glorious consummation.

LECTURE LXVI.

CLOSE COMMUNION.

Those Christians who reject infant baptism, and insist on the exclusive validity of immersion in baptism, have, for the most part, confined their communion to persons of their own persuasion, considering other Christians as unbaptized. Their practice, in this respect, has been termed close or strict communion; while the opposite practice is called free, open, or mixed communion. I propose, in this Lecture, to offer some considerations in opposition to close communion.

Let me premise, however, that I entirely agree with the strict or Calvinistic Baptists in the sentiment, that none but professed believers in Christ,—those who give credible evidence of piety, are entitled to communion at the sacred supper.

Those only who give evidence of being the children of God are entitled to a seat at their Father's table. Those only who are prepared to enjoy real, spiritual communion with Christ and his people are entitled to receive the emblems of such communion. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16.)

But while we are thus confident in the persuasion, that the sacrament of the supper is the exclusive property of those who give evidence of having been born of God, we are equally confident that it belongs to all of this character; and that to withhold it, as many do, on the ground of unessential differences of opinion, from multitudes whom they acknowledge to be true Christians, is a proceeding which (however kind and pure may be their intentions) they are wholly unable to justify.

1. The practice of close communion is contrary to the very

genius and spirit of the gospel. Nothing is more certain, from the gospel, than that the church of Christ is one body, and his body. "As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. xii. 4, 5). To divide the church of Christ, therefore, is to divide his body. To separate a portion of the acknowledged members of his church, and refuse to hold communion with them, is, as Mr. Baxter expresses it, "to separate the different members of Christ's body, to tear his flesh, and break his bones."

Again: the gospel divides the human family into two general classes,—believers and unbelievers, saints and sinners; and to those of the former class—all who give evidence of being in the number of God's children—it uniformly appropriates the privileges of children. These are members of his family, and entitled, as such, to the provisions of his house. Hence, to make a separation between persons of this character, and exclude a part of them from the table of the Lord, is a proceeding not only foreign from the gospel, but manifestly contrary to the very genius and spirit of it.

It is evidently the desire and prayer of Christ that his followers may be one. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John xvii. 20, 21). But how shall this most important object—the unity and fellowship of all true believers in Christ—be best promoted? By drawing lines of separation between them, on the ground of unessential differences, and excluding a part of them from their Master's table? Or, by bearing with one another's mistakes and infirmities, in things not essential to Christian character, and receiving one another, even as Christ has received them?

In every view which can be taken of this subject, I am constrained to regard what is commonly called close communion as contrary to the very genius and spirit of the gospel. And hence it is, that when religion is revived in a community, and Christians of different denominations are accustomed to meet and pray together, till their love is enkindled and their hearts

are warmed, the attachment of any among them to close communion almost uniformly diminishes. The hearts of those who had previously practised it are often pained, and not a few indignantly reject it. So often have facts of this nature been witnessed and reported, that there can be no mistake in regard to them.

2. The practice of close communion agrees not with the teachings and practice of the apostles. There were differences of opinion in the apostolical churches, and some of them of as great importance as those now agitated respecting baptism. Such, for example, was the question of circumcision, and of observing the rites of the Jewish law. Yet neither party, in these old disputes, was tolerated in excluding or denouncing the other. So far from this, they were expressly exhorted to receive one another, on the ground that both were supposed to belong to Christ. "Wherefore, receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (Rom. xv. 7).

Perhaps it will be said that the apostle is here speaking of things indifferent,—things not to be compared with the modern questions respecting baptism. But what are we to understand by things indifferent? Not things of no importance, or about which the apostle had formed no opinion; but things which he regarded as unessential to Christian character and final salvation,—as the questions about baptism confessedly are. Paul certainly had formed an opinion respecting the matters above referred to, and he did consider them as of very considerable importance,—important enough frequently to occupy his thoughts and his pen; but, as he did not think them essential to Christian character, he was very decided in affirming that they ought to be no bar in the way of Christian fellowship and communion. The example of Paul, therefore, in this matter (and the same course was pursued in all the apostolic churches) is decidedly averse to the principle of close communion, and is a reproof to all those who encourage or practise it.

3. The practice of close communion is contrary to that of the church, in the ages succeeding the apostles, and in every age, almost to our own times. There were other differences of opinion among the early Christians, besides those referred to

under the last head; but they were not suffered to interfere with the communion of the church, or to break its unity. Such was the dispute about the time and manner of celebrating Easter, in the second century. This may be deemed a trifling matter by Christians of the present day; but in the times of which we speak it was a question of high interest and importance. And when Victor, one of the bishops of Rome, undertook to excommunicate his Eastern brethren, because they would not yield to his opinion on the subject, he was rebuked for so unchristian a procedure, and obliged to retrace his steps. Says Irenæus, in a letter to him: "The presbyters who before ruled the church which you now govern, neither observed themselves, nor permitted their people to observe, the day which is kept by the Asiatic Christians; nevertheless, they maintained peace with those presbyters who did observe it, and never were any, on account of this diversity, shut out of the church, but the presbyters who preceded you, and did not keep the same day with the Asiatics, sent the eucharist to those who did. And when blessed Polycarp went from Smyrna to Rome, in the time of your predecessor Anicetus, with a view to adjust this matter, they dropped it for the sake of peace, and held communion with each other. And in the church, out of pure respect, Anicetus yielded to Polycarp the dispensation of the eucharist; and they amicably separated from each other, and the peace of the whole church was preserved."[1]

Another dispute with which the primitive church was agitated related to the validity of certain baptisms, and was not altogether unlike the modern questions touching the same subject. Many doubted concerning the baptism administered by heretics, and whether it was proper to receive persons so baptized into the church without a repetition of the ordinance. But neither was this matter, except for a short time, permitted to interrupt the fellowship of the church. "Many things," says an excellent Christian, in a letter to Cyprian, "many things vary according to the diversity of place and people; but, nevertheless, these variations have at no time infringed the peace and unity of the Catholic church."[2]

[1] Eusebius' Ecc. Hist.: Book vi., chap. 24. [2] Cypriani Opera: Part ii., p. 210.

There were differences of opinion among the primitive Christians in regard to the subject of church government. Originally the churches were governed by presbyters, the words presbyter and bishop designating the same office. But in the course of two centuries, Episcopal government was introduced, and the primitive order of things was changed. Yet, these changes, and the discussions necessarily growing out of them, did not produce separate communions. Those who were the most strenuously opposed to the prevailing innovations were entirely averse, as Jerome informs us, to "cutting asunder the harmony of brotherly union."

Our Baptist brethren believe that in the times of the apostles infant baptism was unknown; but that in a few centuries it was introduced, prevailed, and became universal, so that in the age of Augustine, the learned and acute Pelagius was constrained to declare that he had "never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants." It is natural to suppose that so great an innovation (if innovation it be) must have led to differences of opinion and disputes; and now we ask—not for the evidence of such disputes—but for evidence that those disputes, if they ever existed, were suffered to break the unity of the church. Where were the churches which, on account of this alleged innovation, withdrew from their brethren and refused to have communion with them at the table of the Lord? Suffice it to say, that we have no trace of any such churches in ancient times, and no reason to believe that any existed. And this fact, if there were no other, ought to satisfy the abettors of close communion that they have departed from the example of the primitive Christians.

It is claimed, too, by our Baptist brethren that there were many of their sentiments previous to the reformation from Popery, but that they mingled promiscuously with other pious dissenters, and were closely concealed from the eyes of their persecutors. Thus, Benedict says: "Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland, and Germany, many pious persons, who adhered tenaciously to the doctrine of the Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Hussites. These concealed Christians," he adds, "were mostly

Baptists." And Crosby says that, previous to the year 1633, the Baptists in England "had been intermixed with other Protestant dissenters without distinction, and shared with the Puritans in the persecutions of the times."[1] Here are express admissions, on the part of learned Baptist historians, that before the Reformation, and after it, their brethren were "intermixed, without distinction, with other dissenters," and of course that close communion was unknown.

4. The practice of close communion necessarily leads those who adopt it into various palpable inconsistencies. It would seem, from their principles, that what are commonly called Pedobaptist churches are not, in any proper sense, churches of Christ. Baptism, we are told, is "the divinely appointed mode of entrance into the visible church;" and Pedobaptists have not been baptized. Of course they have not so much as entered the visible church; and hence their religious societies cannot, with any propriety, be denominated churches. If the premises are admitted, the conclusion would seem to be inevitable. And yet, close communionists generally profess to regard the Pedobaptist churches as churches of Christ, and their ministers as ministers of Christ. The ministers of the two denominations associate freely in religious meetings, ecclesiastical councils, an exchange of pulpits, and in various other ways.

But then, if the Pedobaptist churches are churches of Christ, why not commune with them as such? and why not admit their members to at least occasional communion? Why present the strange anomaly of acknowledged church members, who cannot be received to one of the ordinances of the church, and of those who are admitted to fellowship in any other mode, as members of Christ's church and ministers of his kingdom, who are not admitted to a seat at his table?

The advocates of close communion are willing to admit that Pedobaptists, or many of them, are real Christians,—the very salt of the earth. But if they are real Christians, they are in the number of God's children, and have a right to come to their Father's table. If they are real Christians, they have spiritual communion with Christ and his people, and ought to

[1] See Benedict's Hist. of Baptists, Vol. I., pp. 138, 197.

be permitted to have visible communion. God communes with them, if they are real Christians; and why should any of the professed people of God be more strict in their communion than he is? If Pedobaptists are real Christians, they are among those who feed upon Christ by faith; and why are they not permitted to feed upon the appointed emblems of his body and blood? They are partakers, really and spiritually, and why should they not be sacramentally? If Pedobaptists are real Christians, they are heirs of heaven, and will shortly be received to heaven; and why should it be made more difficult to obtain a seat at certain communion tables here on earth than at the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven? Why should the Lord's table be barred against the approach of those to whom the gate of heaven is open?

The advocates of close communion are not a little embarrassed with the question, whether it is right for Pedobaptists to celebrate the Lord's supper by themselves. As this ordinance is one of the positive institutions of Christ, it must be the same everywhere; so that if it is right for Pedobaptists to celebrate it in one place, it must be right in another; or, if it is wrong in one place, it is wrong (other things being equal) in another. Hence, if it is wrong for them to celebrate the supper in connection with Baptists, it is no less a profanation of the ordinance for them to celebrate it by themselves. Accordingly, when pressed with the argument in this direction, our brethren sometimes speak out, and declare it to be "a departure from the traditions of the apostles, and a pouring contempt on one of the positive institutions of Christ," for us to come to the communion in the manner we do.[1] Yet, on the other hand, they appear to manifest no great uneasiness at the continuance of this alleged profanation, will consent to preach our sacramental lectures, and by their conduct seem to say, that if we will only keep away from them and celebrate the ordinance by ourselves, they are satisfied.

It affords me no pleasure to urge these inconsistencies upon my brethren of the strict communion; but as their practice necessarily involves them, and many more, it is important that

[1] See Andrews' Strictures, p. 40.

they should be able to appreciate some of the difficulties with which, in the judgment of others, their system is encumbered.

5. I object to the principles of close communion that, under the consistent operation of them, there will often occur cases of real hardship. Those who truly love the Saviour usually set a high value upon their seasons of sacramental communion. They love to sit down with their fellow-disciples at the table of their Lord, lean upon his breast at supper, and feed upon the memorials of his body and blood. But circumstances may be supposed, and will often occur, in which Christians may be deprived of this privilege for years,—perhaps during the greater part of their lives,—unless they are admitted to communion in the Baptist churches. Here, we will suppose, is a pious, devoted mother, a member of a Congregational church, whose lot is cast where she can have Christian intercourse only with Baptists. And her intercourse with them is, in general, pleasant. She listens to their preachers, and is instructed and edified. She goes with them to the prayer-meeting, and her heart is warmed. She coöperates with them in works of faith, and in promoting various objects of Christian benevolence. Her affections mingle with theirs, and theirs with hers, and they are spiritually of one heart and soul. But when the table of the Lord is spread, and she asks permission to come and partake, she is grieved to find herself excluded. "And why," she asks, "am I excluded? Do I not give you satisfactory evidence of being a child of God, —of being one with you in spirit,—of being one with whom the Saviour communes? And why can I not have communion with you?" "Why, dear sister," it is replied, "you have not been baptized." "But I have been baptized," she rejoins. "I have given myself up to God in baptism, according to his appointment, and in that manner which I think most agreeable to his will." "Ah, but you are mistaken on that subject; we know you are; you must renounce your pretended baptism, and go with us into the water, and then we can receive you." "Renounce my baptism!" she exclaims; "I can never do that. It was the most sacred action of my life. I might almost as well renounce my Saviour." "Well, sister, we are sorry for you; but unless you can comply with our terms, we cannot receive

you." And so this child of God, because she will not do violence to her conscience, and renounce what she deems the most sacred act of her life, is driven away from her Father's table; and this, too, when it is known that she can have communion with no other church, but must pass her life, and perhaps end her days, and never more have the privilege of coming to the sacramental board. And is there no hardship in all this? Is there nothing revolting to the pious heart?

The operation of the principles of close communion is often as painful to those who exclude, as to those who are excluded. A brother in the ministry, who had acted upon these principles, and had excluded a pious female under circumstances not very unlike those detailed above, thus writes: "She put her kerchief to her eyes, and turned away, struggling with anguish, and the tears streaming down her face. And oh, how did my heart smite me! I went home exclaiming to myself, Can this be right? Is it possible that such is the law of the Redeemer's house?" It is needless to add, that this ministerial brother is a close communionist no longer.

But these principles of close communion operate hardly in another way. It is a fact that no inconsiderable proportion of the members of our Baptist churches are opposed to close communion; their consciences are pained with it; and their souls are in bondage on account of it. Robert Hall says: "It frequently happens, that the constitution of a church continues to sanction strict communion, while the sentiments of a vast majority of its members are decidedly in favor of a contrary system." In another place, he expresses the opinion, that a majority of the present Baptists are in favor of open communion.[1] A Baptist minister of our own country also says: "It is not known by the close-communion Baptists how many there are of their own denomination who believe, in their hearts, in open communion. I was surprised, after divulging my sentiments, to find so many who entertained the same belief,—some of them for years."[2]

This testimony is in accordance with my own observation. I have known not a few persons—members of Baptist churches—

[1] Works, Vol. I., pp. 369, 401. [2] Brooks' Essay, p. 22.

who freely acknowledged that they were not satisfied with close communion, that they believed it unscriptural, and that they would abandon it at once, were it not for displeasing some of their brethren. But is it no hardship for a Christian to live in this way,—habitually trifling with his conscience, and conniving at that which he thinks is wrong, from a fear of giving offence to his brethren? Is such a state of mind favorable to Christian enjoyment? Is this the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free?

6. I object to the practice of close communion, that it is upheld and continued, in part at least, from sectarian motives. I should not feel warranted in making this assertion, however clearly facts might seem to justify it, were it not that the truth of it is acknowledged. But Mr. Fuller, in his "Conversations on Mixed and Strict Communion" (pp. 24, 25), says: "The tendency of mixed communion is to annihilate, as such, all the Baptist churches in Christendom." And he asks: "Do you wish to promote the dissolution and ruin of the Baptist denomination, as such? If you do not, take heed to your ways." Thus close communion is confessedly to be retained, because its existence is deemed necessary to the continuance of a sect. One of the lines of separation between the members of Christ's mystical body would be gradually worn out and disappear, were it not for close communion; and therefore the practice must be vigorously maintained. In reply, I would only say, that the time has come when Christians should think less about their "denominations, as such," and more about the general interests of truth and of the kingdom of Christ. And it is objection enough to any practice in the church that it requires to be sustained by promoting a sectarian spirit.

7. We object, finally, to close communion, that it is opposed to the spirit of the age, and operates in various ways to retard the progress of Christ's kingdom. The age in which we live is one of peculiar interest. The Christian world is awaking from its slumbers to unwonted efforts; and Satan is coming out in great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. The people of God are beginning to associate, and pray, and operate together, and the enemies of truth and righteousness are combining their

efforts to oppose them. On every hand, lines are drawing and sides are taking, preparatory to the conflict of the last days. The aspects of the times obviously demand the utmost practicable union among Christians, and that everything tending to obstruct this union should be taken out of the way. One of the obstructions, unquestionably, is close communion. This tends, as we have seen, to break the unity of the church; to interrupt the flow of Christian charity; to impair and hinder the exercise of love. It insulates and weakens the efforts of those who ought to live together as brethren, and go hand in hand in their appropriate work. It leads those often to waste their strength upon each other, whose united strength ought to be directed against a common enemy. It causes those to interfere and contend with each other, between whom there should be no strife, except who shall be most fervent in love and most zealous in efforts for promoting the Redeemer's kingdom. An incalculable amount of time, labor, and money, which is now expended for sectarian purposes, might be directed to the common interests of Christianity were it not for close communion. In how many places in these United States, where there are now two or three societies, all feeble, struggling for existence, and aided perhaps by public charity, might there be one strong, efficient society, able to support itself and to assist others, if those who regard each other as real Christians could only consent to commune together at the table of the Lord? In how many places where there are now two or three ministers,—mutually jealous, and standing in each other's way,—might there be but one, leaving the others to go to more distant fields, were it not for the same cause?

We earnestly commend this subject to the consideration of our brethren of the close communion, and would seriously inquire of them whether it is not time, and more than time, that this manifest obstruction to Christian union, and the progress of Christ's kingdom in the world, was removed, to be heard of no more. The obvious tendency of things at the present day is to remove it; and we cannot doubt, if the cause of truth and righteousness continues to prosper, that ere long it will be taken out of the way.

But how? How shall this most desirable object be accom-

plished? This is a very important question; and with a few suggestions in regard to it, we close.

The grand difficulty in the way of open communion, as was remarked at the commencement of the Lecture, is a difference of opinion respecting baptism. Our Baptist brethren insist—on the ground of the apostolical commission and practice, the significance of the two ordinances, and the general suffrage of the church—that baptism is necessary, previous to communion. They also insist that the members of our churches have not been baptized. Consequently they infer, as they think conclusively, that these members cannot with propriety be admitted to the Lord's table. The question now is, How shall this objection be obviated? How shall the difficulty be removed?

There is no probability that this difficulty will be soon removed by a general change of sentiment in our churches, and by our members becoming Baptists. There has been an expectation of this sort among Baptists,—perhaps there is still; but we see no prospect of its speedy accomplishment. No such change of sentiment is to be expected.

Besides, if the other denominations are ever to become Baptists, it is scarcely possible that the change should be effected, under the present system of operations. Separated, as we now are, in our public worship and ordinances, and under the influence of a variety of causes tending to foment and perpetuate sectarian prejudices, how can it be expected that either party should make any considerable approaches towards the other? We agree entirely with Robert Hall, that if the peculiarities of the Baptist denomination are true; if they will bear the test of examination; and if those who hold them are desirous to promote them; their past policy has been a most unhappy one, and it is high time that they were pursuing a more liberal course. Instead of holding themselves separate, and keeping their brethren at a distance, they should seek the fellowship of other denominations who agree with them in essential truth, and mingle with them as freely and fraternally as possible. In this way, they may disarm prejudice, invite a more free and candid discussion, and, if the truth is with them, it will be likely to prevail.

"But how shall we admit you to communion," it is asked, "so long as we regard you as unbaptized?" If our brethren are in earnest in proposing this question, we are very willing to confer with them on the subject. And with due deference, we would ask, Why may we not be admitted, at least to occasional communion, on the ground proposed by Robert Hall? If the baptism of John was not Christian baptism (as is now generally conceded) it is certain that the disciples had not received Christian baptism at the time of the first celebration of the Lord's supper. And if it be said that theirs was an extraordinary case, will it not be lawful to follow their example in extraordinary cases? There is a natural order in which most of the duties incumbent on us should be attended to; but it does not follow, ordinarily, because the first in a series has been neglected, that the remainder cannot be performed. For example, it is according to the established order in our churches, that singing should precede the principal prayer, and prayer the sermon; but because a person is not present to unite in the singing, may he not unite in the prayer? Or, because he is not present to unite in the prayer, may he not listen to the sermon? It is Christ's direction that those who are capable of instruction should be taught before they are baptized. But suppose a minister of the gospel is called to baptize a believer who, he is satisfied, knows four times as much as himself; must he pause, and go through the formality of teaching such an one, before he ventures to administer the ordinance? So if, from misapprehension, or any other cause not affecting his religious character, a sincere Christian has not received baptism, and yet desires to be admitted to the Lord's table, who shall say that he may not come? Because he has been prevented from obeying one command of Christ, who shall prohibit him from obeying another?

But on this view of the subject it is not necessary to enlarge. The works of Mr. Hall are before the public, in which everything which need be said in support of this theory is urged with a surpassing eloquence.

To the advocates of strict communion, we will venture to suggest another, and, we think, better way, in which the difficulties between us may be got over. Let them cease to judge

another man's servant, and leave him to stand, or fall, to his own master. We who differ from them on the subject of baptism are not conscious of neglecting or trifling with the ordinance more than they. We profess to hold it in as high estimation as they do. We observe it, according to the dictates of our own consciences,—according, as we think, to the institution and will of Christ. We find great satisfaction in the ordinance, and believe that our Saviour approves and blesses us in it. And now, brethren, why can you not meet us on this ground? Unless you are infallible, you cannot know that we are wrong, any more than we know you are. And why can you not consent to say: "If you love and prize the ordinance of baptism as you understand it, and really think that you observe it according to the institution of Christ, then enjoy your own opinion. It is not within our province to judge you. We think, indeed, that you are mistaken; but the mistake is yours, not ours; and as it is not of a nature to prevent us from loving and embracing you as Christians, it shall no longer interrupt our Christian communion. Here, brethren, is the table of our common Lord. Come to it with us, if you will; and if you have mistaken the nature of the previous ordinance, you must settle it with Christ, and not with us."

With an invitation such as this, Pedobaptists would be perfectly satisfied. If they are in error, they do not wish their brethren to be partakers with them in the error. If they have in anything mistaken the will of Christ, they choose to assume the responsibility themselves, and to refer the matter directly to him.

But it is said, "Pedobaptists act on the same principle with those of the strict communion, and exclude from the Lord's table, under all circumstances, those whom they regard as unbaptized." But *this is not true.* We repeat the asseveration, and hope it may be noted and remembered, THIS IS NOT TRUE. Were a person to request communion with us, who professed to love and prize the ordinance of baptism, who sincerely thought that he had been baptized, and who gave evidence of being prepared to enjoy spiritual communion with Christ; we certainly should admit him, although we might regard his bap-

tism as a nullity. We should do it on the principle laid down above.

And such cases are of not unfrequent occurrence in our churches. Some of our brethren consider the baptisms which were formerly administered on the ground of the half-way covenant as invalid; and more have the same opinion in regard to the baptisms of Roman Catholics and Unitarians. But should a pious, godly professor of religion, who had been baptized in either of these ways, and was satisfied with what had been done, request to come to the Lord's table with us, we certainly should admit him, whatever opinion we might entertain concerning the validity of his baptism. If he was seriously and conscientiously satisfied, we should not undertake to judge betwixt him and his Master, but should leave the question of his baptism to be determined at a higher tribunal.

But it will be objected again: "Since we regard baptism as prerequisite to communion, and regard Pedobaptists as not baptized, how can we receive them to our communion, without becoming partakers of their sin?" But are you sure that Pedobaptists commit sin, in coming to the Lord's table, even on supposition that they have misapprehended the nature of baptism? They have received what they most seriously believe to be Christian baptism, and feel under solemn obligations to come to the Lord's table in remembrance of him. And now what shall they do? Can you in conscience affirm that it will be sinful for them to come? On the contrary, as they view the subject, will it not be sinful for them to stay away? But we need not argue this question, as some of the more recent and intelligent advocates of close communion have themselves decided it. Says Mr. Fuller: "On their own principles, Pedobaptists do right, in partaking of the Lord's supper, though, in our opinion, unbaptized; their conviction, and not ours, being their proper directory."[1] Mr. Kinghorn, in his reply to Hall, takes the same ground. And now this is all which need be said in the case. If Pedobaptists were admitted to the Lord's table with Baptists, they would come "on their own principles," and in compliance with their own convictions of duty; and conse-

[1] Conversations, etc., p. 32.

quently, as Mr. Fuller says, they would do right,—they would not sin; and their brethren, in admitting them, need be in no fear of becoming partakers in other men's sins.

But say our Baptist friends further: "Should we not, by such a procedure, at least give countenance to what we conceive to be an error?" And we answer, Not at all. It being known at the time that you do not coincide in opinion with your Pedobaptist brother, but merely consent that he shall come to the Lord's table with you,—on his own principles and responsibility, and in compliance with his own convictions of duty, because you think that he belongs to Christ,—it does not appear that you would be yielding any sinful or dangerous countenance to what you believe to be his errors. The Jewish and Gentile converts in the days of Paul had each their own opinions respecting the practice of circumcision, yet they constantly communed together under the direction of the apostles, and no complaint was made or suspicion felt that either party was countenancing the other in error, or becoming a partaker of its sin. On no subject whatever are the views of Baptists more fully understood than on that of baptism; and the only inference which could justly be drawn from the fact of their admitting the Pedobaptist to the table with them would be, that they were willing to have communion with him because they believed him a follower of Christ; while at the same time they deplored what they deem his errors, and prayed that he might be instructed in the way of the Lord more perfectly. And we leave it to the consciences of our Baptist brethren to decide whether such an inference would be disgraceful to them as Christians, or of dangerous consequence to the interests of Christ's kingdom.

On the whole, we cannot doubt that close communion is wrong in principle and injurious in practice, and that the time has fully come when it ought to be done away. As evangelical Christians, Baptists and Pedobaptists, seem not likely to agree at present in regard to one of the special ordinances of the gospel, but do agree in regard to the nature and obligations of the other, there can be no good reason why they should not, occasionally at least, partake of the latter ordinance together. In this way they would wipe off much of the reproach which at present attaches

to them, and manifest to the world that, notwithstanding remaining differences, they do feel, and are resolved to act, as the disciples of a common Saviour. We know, indeed, if this point were gained, that much wisdom and grace would still be needed in order to perfect and perpetuate peace. For combustible materials would remain on both sides, in the midst of which discordant spirits might scatter their firebrands and easily blow them to a flame. But Christian love would overcome all difficulties, and quench the latent sparks of contention before they were kindled. By the removal of close communion, one source of contention in the church would be dried up, and one effectual step would be taken towards a complete and final union. The parties by being brought into more intimate relations would be in a better situation to dispose of remaining differences; and the Saviour, who prayed so fervently while on earth for the peace of his followers, might be expected to approve, and bestow his blessing.

LECTURE LXVII.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

In several preceding Lectures, we have considered the subject of baptism, together with some important questions connected with it. We now turn to the other special ordinance or sacrament of the new dispensation,—the Lord's Supper.

This ordinance was instituted by the Saviour, during the last Passover,—the same evening in which he was betrayed,—the evening before his crucifixion. His disciples having made ready for the Passover, "when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve." "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, Take, eat, this my body. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 26–28).

The narrative of this transaction, which is given in nearly the same words by three of the evangelists, and again many years afterwards by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xi. 23), teaches us, first of all, that what was now done was no part of the ordinary celebration of the Passover. It was something superadded to the Passover, or aside from it,—a change which no being but the Lord of the Passover had any authority to make. It was, in fact, a new institution.

And as this new institution came up, during the celebration of the Passover, it is further evident that it was designed to take its place. It was to be, in many respects, to the church under the new dispensation, what the Passover had been to the church under the old.

The institution carried on the face of it that its Author was

about to die by the hand of violence, and that the sacred supper was to be a standing memorial of his death. "This do, in remembrance of me. For as oft as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, till he come" (1 Cor. xi. 26).

The ordinance thus instituted was evidently designed to be perpetuated in the church. This is proved from the very nature of it, as a commemorative institution. It is proved also from the fact that it was observed with great earnestness and constancy by the churches, under the direction of the apostles. For a time, they seem to have observed it every Lord's day. And with what care does the Apostle Paul instruct the Corinthians as to the manner of observing it, many years after the crucifixion; informing them at the same time, and not them only, but all the churches wherever his Epistle should be read, that the ordinance was to be continued, and the death of Christ thereby to be shown forth, till his second coming, at the end of the world.

Before attempting to unfold the proper import and design of this ordinance, it will be necessary to consider a most flagrant corruption and perversion of it, which commenced early in the church, and has continued throughout the greater part of nominal Christendom, to the present time.

We have seen that the earliest corruption of baptism, as to the import of it, consisted in substituting baptism for regeneration,—the sign for the thing signified. It was in the same way, precisely, that the holy supper began to be corrupted. Instead of being regarded as (what in truth it is) a sign of the death and sufferings of Christ,—a symbol of his expiatory sacrifice upon the cross,—it was held to be the sacrifice itself. In the supper, we are told that "Christ is literally sacrificed for us. His body is broken, his blood is spilled, and both are taken by the communicant, every time he comes to the ordinance." Now this we call a monstrous perversion of this precious institution. And a glance at the history of this innovation and perversion cannot fail to be interesting and instructive.

In the age immediately succeeding the apostles, the sacrament of the supper was held and observed, in its primitive simplicity.

"No ceremonies were added, to render it more venerable in the eyes of the people; no false notions were entertained of its design; no mystery was supposed to be concealed under the symbols and the perscribed actions; the words of Christ were understood according to the meaning which common sense would put upon them; and the ordinance was regarded as a memorial of his passion, and a means of strengthening the faith and the love of his followers." But these times of purity and simplicity did not continue very long. As the spirit of religion began gradually to decline, its ritual was increased; and the points about which new rites began to cluster were the primitive sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. Those holy ordinances were administered in private; they were spoken of as the Christian mysteries; and some awful, mystical efficacy was supposed to reside in them. Language began to be used pretty early,—at first rhetorically, but afterwards literally,—implying something more than the spiritual presence of Christ in the sacrament;—importing a kind of corporeal presence. The ordinance, too, was regarded as of a saving character. The words of our Saviour, taken literally, were applied to it: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John vi. 53).

It was not, however, till the ninth century, that transubstantiation was explicitly inculated. The author of the heresy was Radbert, Abbot of Corbey, in France, who taught that "after the consecration of the bread and wine, nothing remained of these symbols but the outward figure, under cover of which the body and blood of Christ were really and locally present; and that the body of Christ, thus present in the eucharist, was the same body which was born of the Virgin, suffered on the cross, and was raised from the dead."

Although the public mind had long been preparing for such an announcement as this, still it encountered, at the first, a formidable opposition. Among its opposers were the Emperor Charles the Bold, the Monk Ratram, and the celebrated John Scotus. But the doctrine was so much in accordance with the spirit of the age, and so well calculated to increase a veneration for the clergy, and to advance their power, that it gradually and

continually prevailed, and opposition to it died away. Its last formidable opponent in the church of Rome was Berengar, in the eleventh century; and, after numberless persecutions and vexations, he ended his life in exile.

In the sixteenth century, transubstantiation received its final sanction from the Council of Trent, which decreed as follows:

1. "If any man shall deny that in the sacrament of the most holy eucharist there are contained truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore a whole Christ, and shall say that they are in it only as in a sign or a figure; let him be anathema.

2. "If any man shall say that in the holy sacrament of the eucharist there remains the substance of the bread and wine, together with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and shall deny the wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and the whole substance of the wine into the blood, the form of bread and wine only remaining, which conversion the Catholic church most fitly calls transubstantiation; let him be anathema."

Such is a brief account of the manner in which the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation was introduced and finally established in the Romish church. My objections to it are more and greater than I have now time to offer. Still, I must glance at some of them.

The doctrine in question rests entirely on a literal interpretation of our Saviour's words: "This is my body; this is my blood." But if these words are to be understood literally, why not some other of our Lord's declarations, such as "I am the vine;" "I am the door;" "I am the way"? Yet no one ever thought of giving a literal interpretation to passages such as these.

It is a good rule of interpretation, that the literal sense is not to be dropped, and a figurative one assumed, without an obvious necessity. But there *is* a necessity of supposing a figure in the passages before us,—a necessity as urgent as can possibly be conceived. For at the time of saying, "This is my body,"

and "This is my blood," our Saviour was alive in the body, and standing in the presence of his disciples. And how could they possibly understand him as proposing to give them that identical body, under the form of bread, which they saw living and breathing before them; and that identical blood, under the form of wine, which was then actually coursing in his veins?

But even this is not the worst of it. The body which our Lord symbolically gave to his disciples was a broken body, and the blood was shed blood. And if we are to suppose the disciples to have understood him literally, then they must have regarded him as giving them his crucified body before it was crucified, and his shed blood while as yet his blood had not been shed!! They must have regarded him as giving them a dead body, which they knew was alive; a broken, mangled, crucified body, which they saw before them well and whole!! They must have believed that Christ held himself, body and blood, in his own hands, and then passed himself over into their hands; and that, while they actually saw him standing before them, he was literally in their own mouths!! If a supposition so monstrous and self-contradictory does not create a necessity for a somewhat figurative interpretation, then no such necessity ever was created, or can be supposed, under any circumstances, to exist.

And yet the interpretation required in order to give the true sense of the passage in question, can hardly be called a figurative one. It is one of continual occurrence, in parallel passages, throughout the inspired volume. When one thing is to be understood as denoting, symbolizing, or signifying another, the sacred writers commonly employ the connecting verb *to be*, just as in the passages under consideration. Thus, in interpreting Pharaoh's dream, Joseph says: "The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years;" that is, they denote, they signify seven years. So the ten horns in one of Daniel's visions, "are ten kings;" and the seven stars, in the first chapter of the Revelation, "are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches." Moses, speaking of the paschal lamb, says: "It is the Lord's

passover;" just as our Saviour says of the broken bread: "This is my body."

We see, then, that the interpretation which Roman Catholics put upon the passages in question not only is not required, but is such an one as cannot for a moment be supposed or justified.

There are also other insuperable objections to it besides those which have been considered. The elements employed in the eucharist, after their consecration, are often called by the sacred writers bread and wine. Thus the disciples, after the Pentecost, "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42). At a later period, they were accustomed to come together on the first day of the week, "to break bread" (Acts xx. 7). Again the apostle says: "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16.)

It may be further objected to the doctrine of transubstantiation, which supposes a literal sacrifice of Christ in every instance of the celebration of the supper, that on this ground he must have been sacrificed millions and millions of times. But it is expressly declared in the Scriptures that Christ has been sacrificed but once. "Now once, in the end of the world, hath Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. ix. 26). "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. ix. 28). "Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust" (1 Pet. iii. 18).

But leaving the Scriptures, it is objection enough to the doctrine in question that it contradicts and subverts the testimony of all our senses. Our senses were given us to make us acquainted with external things, and this purpose they are admirably adapted to accomplish. On their testimony we rely, not only in the common affairs of life, but for nearly all the evidences whether of natural or revealed religion. How is it that we discover marks of design in the world around us, and consequent proof of an all-wise designer, but from the testimony of the senses? And how did the disciples of Christ know that he performed miracles and uttered prophecies, but from the same testimony? And how do we become acquainted with the truths and facts of the gospel, but by reading them in the

Scriptures or hearing them from the lips of the living teacher,—in other words, from the testimony of the senses? Certainly, any theory of philosophy or doctrine of religion, which contradicts the unequivocal testimony of the senses,—as transubstantiation confessedly does,—is on that account to be rejected. It strikes at the very foundations of knowledge, and cannot be received as true.

Another view of the Lord's supper, akin to that which has been considered, is consubstantiation. This supposes the elements to be unchanged; and yet that the veritable body and blood of Christ are somehow united to them and present in them, so that the communicant, in receiving the sacrament, partakes of the real body and blood of the Saviour. This is the view held by Luther, and the early Lutheran reformers, and which belongs to the creed of the present Lutheran church. But this theory, though less absurd in some of its aspects than the former, is still liable to most of the same objections. Both suppose our Saviour's human body, his corporeal frame, to be in thousands of different places at the same instant. The Scriptures positively assure us that it is in heaven; but the doctrine we are considering places it also on the earth, and in every part of the earth at once, wherever the ordinance is administered. Hence, the speculations which have been indulged in at different periods respecting the ubiquity of Christ's human body.

Just before the crucifixion, our Saviour told his disciples that he was about to leave them and return to his Father in heaven: "It is expedient for you that I go away." "I leave the world and go to the Father" (John xvi. 7, 28). But, on the theories before us, this language was not true. Christ did not leave the world in any sense. As he did not leave it spiritually, so neither did he bodily. His body still remained upon the earth, to be sacrificed and eaten in every celebration of the holy supper.

The Apostle Paul teaches, that while the saints are at home in the body they are absent from the Lord,—absent, not spiritually, but from his personal, corporeal presence. But, according to the theories before us, this is not true. Men may be at home in the body, and yet be present with the Lord,—present

(if they can find a priest to give them the sacrament) to his body, soul, and divinity,—present in every sense in which the saints are present with him in heaven.

It is implied, in the doctrines before us, not only that our Saviour's body is in thousands of different places at the same time, but that it is in exceedingly different, and totally opposite, states or conditions. It is in a state of glory, at the right hand of the Father in heaven, and in a state of the deepest humiliation on earth. It is exalted "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come;" and at the same instant is in the mouths of thousands of communicants, to be there chewed, masticated, swallowed, and digested!

But we need not pursue further these incredible, impossible, monstrous suppositions. It is mortifying to think that any human being should ever have so stultified himself as to entertain them for a moment. It is distressing to know that they are not only entertained, but professedly believed, at this moment, by millions and millions of our fellow-men.

Nor are the theories on which I have remarked to be regarded in the light of mere absurdities. They are dangerous absurdities, full of hazard, and fraught with ruin to the interests of undying souls. Transubstantiation is accompanied always with the grossest idolatry. The consecrated, transmuted bread and wine are reverently worshipped. They are adored, on bended knees, as the very Saviour.

The breaden god, having been worshipped, is next eaten. What other class of idolaters was ever known to devour their gods? Yet the Romanist literally eats his god so often as he partakes of the consecrated wafer.

Nor is this the worst of it. The supposed divinity, having been adored and eaten, is then trusted to as an indwelling Saviour. The poor, deluded votary flatters himself that he has received Christ. He has literally eaten the flesh of the Son of God, and has eternal life abiding in him. Of course he is satisfied with what he has done. He knows, he seeks no other salvation. He passes blindly on to death and judgment, and finds, when it is too late, that he has a lie in his right hand.

But it is time, and more than time, that we turn from these absurd and ruinous theories in regard to the sacramental supper, and seek for its true import and influence.

The Lord's supper, like baptism, is to be regarded as both a sign and a seal. As a symbol or sign it is significant. It sheds a light, it affords instruction. This is the view taken of it by Paul, when he says: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. xi. 26). But what are some of the lessons of instruction held up, as it were, visibly, prominently before us, in the sacrament of the supper?

1. We here see our own exceeding sinfulness. In this body broken and blood shed for us, we see what our deservings are. Were it not that we are guilty, ruined creatures, in danger of eternal death, the Saviour need not have died for us. His body need not have been broken, nor his precious blood been spilt.

2. The Lord's supper places visibly before us that great central doctrine of our religion, an atonement for sin. It was to make this atonement that Christ died upon the cross. And this was enough. With this, eternal justice was satisfied. The atonement was complete when our Saviour said: "It is finished; and bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

3. The Lord's supper sets before us, symbolically, the manner in which the saving benefits of the atonement are to be appropriated. It is by faith. By faith we are to feed upon the living bread. By faith we are to receive the cup of salvation. By faith we are to eat the flesh of the Son of man, and to drink his blood; or (which is the same) appropriate to ourselves the benefits of his death.

4. In the sacred supper, we have set before us the visible union and communion between Christ and his people. They feed upon him. They live upon him. And, as they live upon the Saviour, so they have a most blessed communion with him. Their visible communion with him at his table is but an emblem of that sweeter spiritual communion with which their souls are refreshed. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread

which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16.)

5. The supper of the Lord sets forth, also, that union, that fellowship, which all Christians have, or should have, one with another. Sitting together around the table of a common Lord, Christians appear to be—what they should be, and what, if sincere, they really are—the children of one Father, the disciples of one Master, the brethren and sisters of one great family, united in object and affection on earth, and journeying onward to the same eternal home in heaven.

Such are some of the precious instructions which the Lord's supper is calculated to set before us and impress upon us as a sign. But its nature, its importance, does not all lie here. I have said that it is a seal, as well as a sign; in which view it has a binding efficacy. When a Christian goes to the supper of the Lord, he renews the covenant into which he had before entered, and by a solemn, sealing ordinance, binds himself to be faithful. And this covenant is virtually renewed and the seal repeated every time the sacrament is received. It is this fact, preëminently, which renders it so solemn a thing to go to the Lord's table; which makes it necessary for "a man to examine himself, and so eat of that bread, and drink of that cup;" which gives impression to the fearful truth, that "whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." It is solemn to enter into covenant with God. It is solemn to renew this covenant. But it is specially solemn to seal and re-seal it upon our consciences and hearts, by receiving the emblems of a Saviour's body and blood.

As to the presence of Christ in the holy supper, we have seen in what sense he is not present. He is not there materially, corporeally. His presence with his people in this solemn ordinance is altogether of a spiritual nature. He is present, by the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. In this sense, Christ is present with his people, when they meet together for prayer and praise. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). In this sense he is present with them in their closets, in the social

circle, and in the house of God. But Christ is specially present with his people in the sacraments; and more especially in that of the supper. He makes "himself known to them in the breaking of bread." There are good reasons why it should be so. In this holy ordinance, Christ is brought very specially to the view of his people. He is set forth, as it were, crucified before them. He is also brought most impressively to their recollections. They come to his table in remembrance of him. It is here also, as we have seen, that they renew their covenant engagements to Christ, and bind themselves, by solemn seals and new obligations, to live to his glory. Now, all these things are intended and calculated to strengthen the faith of God's people, to inspire gratitude, to kindle the flame of love, and to prepare them for a more devoted consecration and obedience. And in proportion as these objects are fulfilled upon them, Christ will be present with them, by his Spirit, to comfort and to bless. He will be with them at his table, to fill their souls with divine light and love, their hearts with rejoicing, and their lips with praise.

The mode of administering the Lord's supper varies very considerably in different churches. In the church of Rome, the bread is not broken, and the cup is withheld from the people. But both these circumstances are to be regarded as perversions of the ordinance. The breaking of the bread is an important part of the symbol, setting forth the broken body of the Saviour; and the administration of the cup to the whole body of the communicants is expressly commanded by our Lord. "He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it" (Matt. xxvi. 27). What arrogance, then, to withhold the cup from the great body of the church, and decide that they shall not drink of it!

Not only the church of Rome, but some Protestant churches, require that the sacrament be received in a kneeling posture. But this, it has seemed to me, savors of superstition. It is not strange that the Romanist, who believes that what he sees before him is the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ, should kneel before it and receive it in a posture of adoration. But that evangelical Christians, who believe that the consecrated

elements—though symbols of the body and blood of Christ—are in themselves no more than bread and wine, should kneel before them and seem to adore them, at least savors of superstition, to give it no harder name. It is very certain that the disciples did not receive the elements in this posture when administered to them by the Lord himself.

As to the most proper mode of administering this holy ordinance, I have only to say: Let it be done in the very words of the institution, and as near as possible after the divine pattern. The sacraments of the New Testament have long enough, and too long, been encumbered, disfigured, and perverted, under a load of superstitious inventions. It is time that they be disencumbered and restored to their primitive simplicity and significance.

As respects the frequency with which the Lord's supper should be administered, since no precise rule is given in the Scriptures, it would be difficult, perhaps presumptuous, for man to legislate. The administration should not be so frequent as to degenerate into a common, ordinary service; nor should it be so unfrequent that the good influences of it may not be felt from one season to another. Once a month we should think the extreme of frequency; once in three months may be regarded as the other extreme.

We conclude with a single remark. The Lord's supper is obviously an ordinance for Christians; and by Christians I mean real Christians,—regenerated persons. The impenitent, regarding themselves as such, and remaining such, have no right of access to it; nor by those who regard them as such should they, under any circumstances, be admitted. The ordinance was administered by our Saviour to his disciples,—not to the multitude. It was instituted and intended for the edification of Christians, and not for the awakening and conversion of the ungodly. The very act of feeding upon the symbol of Christ's body implies that we feed upon him by faith. The very act of drinking the symbol of his blood implies that our trust is in that blood. The act of visibly communing with Christ and his people implies that we have real, spiritual communion, both with him and with them. In short, the act of coming to the

Lord's table implies, on the very face of it, that we are Christians; or, at least, that we hope and trust we are; and those who have no such hope cannot come without manifest hypocrisy. The Lord grant that we may all so come to this holy ordinance on earth, as to be prepared by means of it to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven. Amen.

LECTURE LXVIII.

POPERY AS A CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

The system of Popery assumes that Christ instituted his church upon earth, not as a free government, but a monarchy; that before his ascension into heaven he constituted the Apostle Peter his vicar and vicegerent; that Peter was the first bishop of Rome; and that Peter transmitted to the Roman bishops, who came after him in uninterrupted succession, all the powers and prerogatives which had been conferred upon himself. Hence, each and all of these bishops, from Peter to the present pontiff, have been the vicegerents of Christ upon the earth, and have had as much power in the church and in the world as Christ could have exercised had he remained here personally. In other words, they have supreme and universal authority. By them bishops are constituted in the churches. By them kings reign or cease to reign over the nations of the earth.

Such in its theory and central authority is Popery; and all its doctrines, rules, and rites—all the vast machinery by which the system is worked—grows out of and rests upon this fundamental principle,—the supremacy of the Roman pontiff, as the successor of Peter.

In treating of Popery, therefore, as a system of government, it will only be necessary to examine this fundamental principle. If this is supported, all the rest flows naturally from it. If this is subverted, the whole fabric falls to the ground.

In examining this main pillar of Popery, let it be inquired, then,—

I. Whether Christ did really confer upon Peter that supremacy and authority for which the Romanists contend.

II. Whether Peter was ever constituted bishop of Rome. And,

III. On supposition that he was bishop of Rome, and brought with him to the episcopal chair all the authority and honors which Romanists claim for him, whether he transmitted these to his successors, and they again to theirs, in unbroken succession to the present time.

First, then, did Christ actually confer upon Peter that supremacy and authority for which Roman Catholics contend?

That the Apostle Peter, though an erring and imperfect man, was yet, on the whole, a faithful disciple of Christ, on whom he bestowed distinguished favors and honors, may be fairly gathered from the books of the New Testament. He is generally supposed to have been the eldest of the apostles. Possessing a forward, ardent, and impulsive temperament, a vigorous mind, and a fluent tongue, he seems, during the personal ministry of Christ, and for some time afterwards, to have been the chief speaker among his brethren, and a frequent organ of communication between them and their Master. But that any such pre-eminence was conferred on him by Christ, as that which the Romanists pretend, is not only an unscriptural supposition, it is one which the Scriptures unequivocally contradict. The passages cited by Romanists in support of their claim are enough to satisfy us of this, even if we had no other light on the subject.

It is said, for example, that when the names of the apostles occur in the New Testament, that of Peter is always mentioned first. But this is not true. The name of Peter does not always stand first. "When James, Cephas (or Peter), and John, perceived the grace that was given unto me," etc. (Gal. ii. 9). "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as the other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" (1 Cor. ix. 5.) But suppose the name of Peter did always stand first, as it frequently does, would it follow from this circumstance that Peter was constituted prince of the apostles, universal bishop, and that all power was committed into his hands?

Not only the supremacy of Peter, but his infallibility, have

been argued from what our Saviour said to him just before his fall: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 31, 32). A strange passage this, considered in its connection, from which to gather pontifical honors for Peter. It imports rather his weakness, than his supremacy; his frailty, then his infallibility. The advocates of Popery must presume largely on the stupidity and ignorance of their people, or they never would venture upon such an argument as this.

Peter's supremacy in the church has been further argued from what our Saviour said to him after his resurrection: "Feed my sheep. Feed my lambs." But this is the identical charge which the Apostle Paul gave to the Ephesian elders; and which Peter himself gave to certain elders whom he addressed: "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts xx. 28). "Feed the flock of God which is among you," etc. (1 Pet. v. 2). It is the same charge which is now given to all Christ's ministers. It enters into their very commission to preach the gospel.

Some Catholics have inferred from Christ's charge to Peter the obligation of burning heretics. "The duty of feeding the sheep," they say, "necessarily involves that of destroying the wolves." We think this inference from the passage quite as obvious, and as reasonable, as the former.

The supremacy of Peter has been urged from various other passages of the New Testament;—from the circumstance that our Saviour entered into his ship and taught (Luke v. 3); that "Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples," soon after the ascension of Christ, and proposed to them the choice of another apostle (Acts i. 15); that he was the principal, though not the only preacher on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 4); that he rebuked the falsehood of Ananias and Sapphira, in consequence of which they fell down dead (Acts v. 3); that he performed so many and great miracles (Acts v. 15); that the church prayed so effectually for him, when in prison (Acts xii. 5;) that Paul went up to Jerusalem to see him, and "abode with him fifteen days" (Gal. i. 15); indeed, from almost every cir-

cumstance in the life of Peter, unless it were his denial of his Master, his dissimulation and rebuke at Antioch, and the fact that our Saviour once called him Satan, and told him to get out of his sight (Matt. xvi. 23). But what do all such passages prove? Undoubtedly, that Peter was a forward, prompt, bold, and for the most part honored disciple; one who sometimes made great mistakes, but who was ready to correct them; one whom his Saviour loved, and whom his brethren loved, and in whom they placed great confidence; but not that he was exalted to any supremacy over them, or over the church, whose interests they were all laboring to promote. Such an idea seems not to have entered into the mind of one of them; and least of all into that of Peter.

But the principal passage in proof of Peter's supremacy, and almost the only one that has enough of plausibility to entitle it to a serious consideration, is that in Matt. xvi. 18: "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and on this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Our Saviour had asked Peter, and the other disciples: "But whom say ye that I am? And Peter said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Saviour then replied, in the words before given: "Thou art Peter," etc. The principal inquiry now is, What did our Saviour mean by the word rock? "On this rock will I build my church," etc. The Romanists insists that the rock means Peter; and in proof of it they tell us that the word πετρος, Peter, signifies a rock, a stone. But the word here rendered rock is not πετρος, the name of Peter, in the masculine gender, but πετρα, in the feminine; thus clearly indicating that the masculine πετρος was not the thing intended, but something else, which could be set forth by another and a feminine noun, πετρα. What, then, was the πετρα, the rock? Clearly, as it seems to me, the noble confession which Peter had just made; or rather, the foundation truth which Peter had uttered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This truth is, indeed, the πετρα, the rock, on which the whole church rests; and "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

We see, therefore, from the very terms employed, that Peter

was not the rock. We learn the same from many other Scriptures. Christ, and not Peter, is set forth in both Testaments, as the corner-stone of Zion,—the rock which lies at the foundation of his church. "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner" (Ps. cxviii. 22). "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation" (Is. xxviii. 16). "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 11).

But we have not yet done with Christ's declaration to Peter. "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19). Here is, undoubtedly, a communication of authority; but it is an authority which Peter enjoyed, not alone, but in common with the rest of the apostles. This is certain from the fact that, in parallel passages, the same power is expressly imparted to all the apostles, which is here conferred upon Peter. "Verily, I say unto you" (disciples), "that whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 18). "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John xx. 23).

These apostles were God's chosen instruments for laying the foundations of the Christian church. It devolved on them to open to the world the new dispensation; to organize the Christian community, and give it laws; to preach the kingdom of God, and gather men into it. To qualify them for this most important work, they received the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so that whatever they did or said, in discharge of their high commission, was to be regarded as coming from God. It was in this sense that they were qualified to bind, or loose; to remit sins, or retain them; and might be said to have the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever new laws or burdens they might impose upon the church, God imposed them; and whatever existing burdens they might remove, God removed them. They were qualified, by the Spirit, to state pre-

cisely the conditions of pardon and justification; so that whose soever sins they might declare remitted, would be remitted; and whose soever sins they declared retained, would be retained. Here was, indeed, a high and responsible authority committed to the apostles; but then it was committed to all alike,—no more to Peter than the rest; and the inspiration with which they were favored qualified them to exercise it with unerring fidelity. We see, then, that this whole passage, rightly interpreted, confers no supremacy or superiority upon Peter.

That he possessed no superiority in the apostolic churches is abundantly evident from other Scriptures. On one occasion, our Saviour absolutely prohibited any of his disciples (and Peter, of course, among the rest) from exercising authority one over another. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you;"—an express contradiction of the alleged supremacy of Peter, and a prohibition of all Popish dominion (Matt. xx. 25).

"When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John" (Acts viii. 14). Here, Peter seems subject to authority, rather than in the possession of it.

When Peter had returned from his mission to Cornelius, and had "come to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them" (Acts xi. 3). This does not look as though Peter had the supremacy among the disciples, and was their acknowledged sovereign and head.

At Antioch, Paul "withstood Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed" (Gal. ii. 11). Peter, you see, was not infallible; nor did Paul know aught at this time of his supremacy. On another occasion, Paul says, "I was not a whit behind the chiefest apostles"—of course not behind, or inferior to, Peter (2 Cor. xi. 5).

The consultation which was held at Jerusalem on the question of circumcising the Gentile converts is often appealed to in proof of Peter's supremacy. But nothing can more effectually disprove it. If there was any superiority manifested here, it was

that of James, and not of Peter. For after the case had been fully stated, and Peter and the rest had delivered their sentiments, James summed up the matter in the following words: "My sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned unto God," etc. (Acts xv. 19). What presumption this, on the part of James, on supposition that Peter had long before been constituted prince of the apostles, and Christ's vicar and vicegerent on the earth!

As the other apostles had no idea of Peter's supremacy, so the thought seems never to have entered his own mind. In his epistles, written near the close of life, he expresses himself uniformly with great modesty and humility, putting himself on a level with the lowest of his brethren, and condescending to use the language of exhortation and entreaty, when, on the supposition before us, he might more properly have issued out his bulls of authority,—his words of command and commination. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ" (1 Pet. v. 1).

And as neither Peter himself, nor the church in his age, had any thought of his supremacy, so neither did the Christian fathers, who lived in the ages immediately following, entertain any such idea. Several of them expressed their views of the passage, "Thou art Peter," etc., and all, so far as we know, without an exception, interpret the language as conferring nothing upon Peter which did not belong equally to the other apostles.[1] Many of the fathers, as Cyril, Hilary, Augustine, Epiphanius, and Theodoret, interpreted the πετρα, the rock, as I have done, to denote, not Peter, but the great fundamental truth which Peter had professed. Chrysostom speaks of John as the "most beloved of Christ, and the pillar of all the churches;" though he affirms that "the dignity of all the apostles is equal." Indeed, the argument for Papal supremacy, drawn from the alleged supremacy of Peter, was not mentioned or thought of until hundreds of years after the death of the apostles.

But were we to allow (what can never be proved, and what the Scriptures and the Fathers expressly contradict), that Peter

[1] Such, certainly, was the decision of Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, Theophylact, and of many others.

was advanced to a primacy among the apostles, and a supremacy in the church, can it be shown, in the second place, that he was ever bishop of Rome? For if he was not the bishop of Rome, his supremacy, if admitted, would be of no avail to the Roman Catholic.

In answer to this question, I hardly need say, that the Scriptures furnish not one particle of evidence that Peter was ever bishop of Rome, but much evidence to the contrary.

The tradition of the Romanists is, that Peter was first bishop of Antioch, from which place he was transferred to Rome, where he continued bishop twenty-five years, to the time of his martyrdom, which took place in the persecution under Nero, about A. D. 65. Let us take now this tradition, and compare it with the facts and representations of Scripture. From the death of Christ, A. D. 33, to the persecution under Nero, A. D. 65, there were only thirty-two years. From the first and second chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians, it appears that full twenty years after the death of Christ, Peter was a resident at Jerusalem, where Paul went up to see him, and received from him, and James and John, the right hand of fellowship (Gal. ii. 7). We next hear of Peter at Antioch, where he dissembled, and Paul openly rebuked him (Gal. ii. 11). Subsequent to this, he was probably at Corinth, as that church became divided respecting their ministers; some claiming to be of Paul, and some of Apollos, and some of Cephas,—another name for Peter (1 Cor. i. 12). Still later in life, we find him in Babylon, in the neighborhood of which many Jews had resided ever after the Babylonish captivity. It is from this place that he dates his first epistle (1 Pet. v. 13). According to the testimony of Origen, Peter's missionary labors were chiefly among the dispersed Jews in the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia. And this agrees with the representations of Paul, that while he was commissioned to go to the heathen, Peter was the apostle of the circumcision. (Gal. ii. 7.) It agrees also with the representation of Peter himself, who directs his first epistle to "the strangers, (that is, foreign Jews) scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

And now, in view of all these facts, we would seriously ask, Where is there room for Peter's twenty-five years' residence at Rome? After the period when we know of his residence at Jerusalem, there remain but twelve years to the time of his death. And in these twelve years must be included his visit to Antioch and Corinth, and the numerous missionary operations in which he seems to have been engaged during the latter part of his life. Where, then, I ask again, will room be found for Peter's twenty-five years' residence at Rome; or for his being there any considerable time previous to his martyrdom?

But passing over all these chronological difficulties, how does the supposition of Peter's being twenty-five years bishop of Rome agree with other representations of Scripture? Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans about the year 57, long after Peter, according to the tradition of the Romanists, had been made bishop of that church; and yet there is not a word about Peter in it, nor so much as an intimation that Peter, or any other apostle, had ever been at Rome. In the last chapter of the epistle, Paul sends salutations to beloved Christian friends at Rome, mentioning them by name, and intimating a variety of circumstances respecting them; but still not one word with regard to Peter. Two or three years later, Paul himself arrived a prisoner at Rome, and was received with great favor by the brethren, but no mention is made of Peter. Paul dwelt two whole years at Rome, "in his own hired house," where he wrote several of his epistles to the churches; but in none of these do we find the slightest reference to Peter.

Nor is this the worst of it. In the epistles of Paul written from Rome, there are intimations which would be highly disreputable to Peter, on supposition he was now bishop there. "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. ii. 21). "At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge" (2 Tim. iv. 16). Where, now, was Peter on this trying occasion? Did he forsake his brother Paul? In face of all these representations, who can believe that up to the time of Paul's second Epistle to Timothy, Peter had been bishop of Rome?

In short, there is no reason to suppose that, in the proper sense of the term, Peter was ever a bishop anywhere. He was an apostle, and not a bishop. Not only are these two offices distinct; they are incompatible one with the other. An apostle is a missionary, a minister at large, one who has "the care of all the churches." A bishop has, or should have, a pastoral charge. He is the overseer of a particular flock. The apostles were given to the church general, and not to any particular portion or portions of it. They were appointed that they might be "witnesses for Christ, in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts i. 8). Peter is degraded by the supposition that, from being a distinguished apostle, he settled down as bishop of a single city, even though that city were Rome.

There is an additional circumstance, which renders the supposition of Peter's having been bishop of Rome still more violent and inadmissible. Peter was not only an apostle, but the apostle of the circumcision (Gal. ii. 7). He was led, through the greater part of his life, and more especially the latter part of it, to direct his ministrations to the scattered and dispersed Jews. Having been specially appointed to this work, and qualified for it, who believes that he would suddenly retire from it, and take charge of a church in a Gentile city,—a church, too, composed chiefly of Gentile converts? The supposition is, in every view, inadmissible; and with the Scriptures to guide us, we are led unavoidably to the conclusion, that Peter never was bishop of Rome.

But were we to concede even this, and admit that Peter brought to his bishopric that ecclesiastical supremacy for which the Romanists contend; how do we know, in the third place, that his supremacy and authority descended to his successors? There were many things pertaining to the character and office of the apostles which were peculiar to them; which they neither did nor could impart to others; and how does it appear that this alleged supremacy was not one of the incommunicable things? Or, if we regard the supremacy as communicable, there is yet another difficulty. Who was the immediate successor of Peter? Who are his successors now? One tells us

that Clemens was first in the succession. Another, that this honor belongs to Linus. Some say that Cletus and Anacletus were two different popes. Others, that they are but different names of the same person. All agree that Linus was one of the first popes after Peter, if not the very first; but Linus, the ancients tell us, received ordination from Paul, and not from Peter, and consequently can have had no share in the alleged supremacy.

And as we proceed down the line of Romish bishops, we find sometimes two and sometimes three or four popes, quarrelling and fighting for the pontificate; each contending that he has it; and each excommunicating and anathematizing all the rest. Who then shall decide, at this day, where the alleged succession runs, or whether it runs anywhere; whether it has not, long ago, run out, and become extinct?

I here leave the argument for the supremacy of the popes of Rome, growing out of their pretended relation to Peter. A more futile and baseless argument, on which to build so mighty a superstructure, was never before heard of. The moment it is analyzed and examined in the light of Scripture and fact, it vanishes into something less than thin air,—into absolute nothing. Peter had no supremacy given him over the rest of the apostles. Or if he had, we know that he was never bishop of Rome. Or if, clothed with a supremacy, he was bishop of Rome, we have no evidence that he imparted supreme power to his successors; nor do we even know who his successors were.

We might urge many other objections against the existence of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, like that at Rome, with a supreme pontiff at its head, claiming to be the vicegerent of Christ on the earth.

Such a form of government is entirely different from that which was established in the churches by the apostles themselves. This, we have before seen, was not a monarchy, but rather a democracy. It was a free, popular government. Every church was a little community by itself,—choosing its own officers, enacting its own laws, and managing independently its own concerns, subject only to the rules of Christ.

Nothing can be more diverse than such an organization, from that which the Roman pontiffs would force upon the world.

In setting forth Christ's ascension gifts to his church, Paul says: "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11, 12). If now the supreme pontiff, the universal bishop, the vicar and vicegerent of Christ on the earth, were really among those ascension gifts, why is he not mentioned here? Surely, the greatest and most important gift of all, as Roman Catholics view it, ought not to have been omitted.

There is another fact which I submit for consideration. It is likely that several of the apostles lived longer than Peter. John, in particular, is supposed to have survived him more than thirty years. But, on the theory of the Romanists, these surviving apostles were all of them in subjection to the bishop of Rome. Here was the venerable John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, and whom Chrysostom describes as "the pillar of all the churches," in subjection to Clemens, or Linus, or Cletus, or Anacletus, or perhaps successively to them all. If he did not walk or teach according to the mind of those Romish priests, it was their prerogative to control or silence him. And if he did not submit to their dictation, they might issue out their bulls, and have him before them, or might hurl their anathemas at his head.

No more need be said to show that Popish supremacy and the Scriptures are utterly repugnant to each other. They cannot stand or exist together. And as little pretence is there for founding this doctrine of supremacy upon early Christian antiquity. A thousand facts might be adduced to show that it had no existence in the church before the time of Constantine. And for several hundred years after Constantine, the emperors undeniably exercised supreme power in the church. They issued laws, convened councils, deposed bishops, decided controversies, and performed every act of sovereignty, as they pleased. And when, at length, the bishop of Rome acquired the title of universal bishop, it was one of the emperors who con-

ferred it. Near the beginning of the seventh century, the Emperor Phocas,—having murdered his predecessor and mounted his throne,—in order to secure the support of the Romish bishop, bestowed upon him the fore-mentioned title;—a title which one of the bishops of Rome, only a few years before, had declared to be "profane, antichristian, and infernal." It appears, then, that the bishop of Rome became "universal bishop," not by the gift of God, but by the decree of a murderer.

LECTURE LXIX.

PROSPECTS OF THE CHURCH IN THIS WORLD.

That the church of Christ is not always to be, what it always has been, a body comparatively feeble, despised, and persecuted, —that it is yet to be enlarged, so as to fill the earth, and enjoy a long period of rest and peace,—is clearly predicted in the Scriptures, and is the almost universal belief of evangelical Christians. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands, is yet to "become a mountain, and fill the whole earth." "The kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, is to be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (Dan. ii. 35; vii. 27).

The binding of Satan for a thousand years, foretold in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, has generally been supposed to have reference to this promised period of rest and peace to the church. Such was the universal belief of the early Christians, as appears from the writings of Barnabas, Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and many others. Such, too, has been the belief of most modern writers who have treated of the subject. Accordingly, the future period of rest to the church has uniformly been denominated the Millennium, or the thousand years.

A very interesting inquiry in regard to this subject, and one about which there has been much diversity of opinion, has respect to the manner in which the Millennium is to be introduced. How is this great change to be brought about? How is the Millennium to be ushered in?

In the opinion of some, the Millennium is to be introduced by the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the holy dead, and the conflagration of the world; and is to be consum-

mated in the personal reign of Christ with his people in the "new heavens and new the earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Those who hold this opinion believe that the next great event to be looked for is the coming of Christ; and this they are expecting in a very short time.

My objections to this view are many and various, more than I have now time to offer.

In the first place, this doctrine tends to discourage effort in the ways in which it is ordinarily put forth for the spread of the gospel, and the conversion of the world to Christ. "Such effort," it is said, "has never yet availed for the conversion of the great mass of men, and it never will. It is well enough to continue it till Christ shall come; but the world can never be converted in this way." Persons who talk after this manner may disclaim all intention of discouraging effort for the general diffusion of the gospel; and yet it is certain they do it. From the very nature of the case it must be so; and facts might be adduced to prove that it is so. There is no more powerful stimulant to effort than the hope, the prospect, of success. Take this away, and exertion languishes, and zeal and interest expire. They are felt, are manifested no longer.

But, secondly, the Scriptures teach us that not the righteous only, but the wicked, are to be raised at the coming of Christ, and that both classes are to be judged together. The theory before us denies both these positions. The righteous are to be raised at the beginning of the Millennium, and reign with Christ until the close of it; and then the wicked are to be raised and judged by themselves. But how does this doctrine agree with the following representations of Scripture? "The many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2). The representation is that they shall awake together. "The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 28). "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered

all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats" (Matt. xxv. 31). These passages teach unequivocally that the human race, both the righteous and the wicked, are to be raised and judged together, and not at periods far remote from each other.

Thirdly. It is evident, from the closing chapters of the Revelation, that the Millennium is to precede the resurrection and the judgment, and it is to be in the present world. The order of events, as here predicted, is very obvious and distinct. First, we have a description of the Millennium in the beginning of the twentieth chapter. This is followed by a melancholy defection at the close of the thousand years. Next comes the destruction of the hosts of the wicked from off the face of the earth. Next, the great white throne and the general judgment. Next, the final and endless destruction of the wicked. And, last of all, the new heavens and the new earth,—the heavenly Jerusalem,—the everlasting abode of all the saints. In this account, the Millennium clearly precedes the judgment; and precedes, by a great way, the new heavens and new earth.

Fourthly. To suppose the world now to come to an end, and the Millennium to succeed the resurrection and the judgment, is to cut short, immensely, the anticipated triumphs of the gospel. The reign of sin on this earth has been long and terrible. Satan has been vaunting himself "the god of this world," and has been drawing the great body of the world's inhabitants after him to destruction, for almost six thousand years. And if the grand drama of the world's history is to end here; if no more are to be saved than have been already; if the gospel is to achieve no greater conquests; will it not be said that the scheme of redemption has proved a comparative failure? Where are its predicted, anticipated triumphs? Where is the "great multitude which no man can number," the "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," redeemed "out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," the countless myriads of the finally saved, sufficient to satisfy the soul of the Saviour, and in comparison with which the number of the lost may not be greater than is the number of those immured in our prisons, compared with

the happy multitude who enjoy their liberty? Certainly, those who believe that the mystery of God is about to be finished, and the process of redemption to be closed, must have very low ideas of what redemption was adapted to accomplish, and of what, in the progress of things, it is destined to accomplish for the happiness of human beings and the glory of God.

I object, fifthly, to the notion of a Millennium in the other world, that its advocates can give no rational account of the great defection at the close of the Millennium (Rev. xx. 7–9). They tell us, indeed, that the "Gog and Magog" who are "gathered together from the four quarters of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city," are the wicked dead, now just raised from their graves. But the wicked dead are never in the Scriptures called Gog and Magog. Nor, if they were, would they be represented as gathered together from the four quarters of the earth, but rather from their graves. And who can believe that the wicked dead, in that day of horrors, will come out of their graves with the disposition to fight—to make war upon their final Judge and upon his faithful people? Rather will their terror and dismay prompt them to shrink away in fear and darkness, crying to the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne.

But, sixthly, my principal objection to the doctrine of the immediate coming of Christ, and of a Millennium in the other world, is, that there remains much glorious prophecy to be fulfilled in this world before the general conflagration. In particular, the Jews are to be reclaimed from their blindness and infidelity, and converted to the faith of Christ. This the Scriptures have decided with the utmost explicitness. "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." This is an exact description of what the Jews have now been for a long period. But "afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness, in the latter days" (Hos. iii. 4, 5).

In the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, a clear

distinction is made between the Jews and the Gentiles, and it is repeatedly and expressly promised that the Jews are to be converted. "What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" "How much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive tree?" "Blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. As it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

And not only are the Jews to be converted, but with them the fulness of the Gentile world is to be brought in. This is expressly promised in this same eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and in various other parts of the Bible. How often was it promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that in their seed (which is Christ) all the nations and families of the earth should be blessed! This promise, in all its richness and fulness, has never yet been accomplished. It remains that it must be, before the world is destroyed.

"All the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before me" (Ps. xxii. 27). Certainly, this prediction or promise has never yet been fulfilled.

"Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our God, shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him" (Ps. lxvii. 7). It is a part of the promise, that "the earth shall yield her increase;" which shows that it belongs to the present world. The time, then, must come in the present world, when all the ends of the earth shall fear the Lord.

The Psalmist, speaking of Christ's kingdom, says: "In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." "Men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed" (Ps. lxxii. 7, 8, 17). The entire phraseology of this psalm shows that it is to be fulfilled in the present world; while there are mountains and hills, a sun and moon, seas and rivers, rain and showers. And, certainly, much more is predicted here, in

regard to the extension of Christ's kingdom, than has ever yet been accomplished.

Time would fail to quote all the passages from the prophets, in which reference is made to a season of glorious rest to the church, to be enjoyed in the present world. "It shall come to pass, in the last days,"—not in the new heavens and earth, but in the last days,—"that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people will say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Is. ii. 2–4). A prophecy almost verbally similar to this, we have in Micah iv. 1–4. It is obviously to be accomplished in the present world, and as obviously is yet unfulfilled.

Addressing the Messiah, God says: "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth" (Is. xlix. 6). The conversion of both Jews and Gentiles, even unto the ends of the earth, is here predicted to take place under the Messiah's kingdom. Certainly, no such events have yet taken place, nor will they take place in the other world. There will be no conversions there. It follows that the prediction must be accomplished before the end of this world.

With reference to the period of which we speak, God says: "At that time, they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jer. iii. 17). Here again we have a prediction of the conversion of the nations, to be accomplished, of course, in the present world.

The same thing we find often predicted in the New Testament.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened" (Matt. xiii. 33). "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John xii. 32). "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. xi. 15).

From all these passages, to which many others might be added, the two following deductions are clearly drawn :—

1. That much glorious prophecy remains to be accomplished, in the present world. Of course, the end of the present world is not to be immediately expected. And,

2. That the future state of rest and peace to the church, commonly called the Millennium, is to be enjoyed in this world, and not in the next.

The theory above considered, as to the introduction of the Millennium, and the coming of Christ, is that commonly known as the Millerite doctrine,—more confidently advocated some thirty years ago than it is now. The view taken by the Literalists of Great Britain, and of this country, differs somewhat from that which has been examined, and is, at present, more respectably represented. These brethren expect the speedy coming of Christ, not to destroy this world, but to purify it, and reign personally in it. The holy dead are to be raised in their glorified bodies, and are to reign here with Christ upon the earth. Meanwhile, the earth is to continue much as it is at present; and the natural inhabitants of the earth are to live and multiply, they are to be born and to die, as they do now. But under the personal reign of Christ, and the ministry of his saints, the nations of the earth are to be speedily converted, and holiness and peace are to prevail for a thousand years.

This theory of the Millennium is open to several of the objections which were urged against the last. Like that, it depreciates and discourages effort, in the ordinary way, for the spread of the gospel, and the conversion of men to Christ. "Such effort has accomplished but little, especially in modern times. No great changes for the better are to be expected until the

coming of Christ; and then his kingdom will spread and prevail."

This theory, like the last, supposes two resurrections; that of the saints at the opening of the Millennium, and that of the wicked at the end of the world.

Like the last, too, this theory makes no provision for the great defection and catastrophe at the close of the Millennium. When the Lord Jesus Christ shall have reigned here in glory, for the long space of a thousand years, surrounded by his glorified saints; and when, by their instrumentality, his kingdom shall have been extended all over the earth; where is that vast company of ungodly sinners to come from, who are to compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, in number as the sand of the sea? (Rev. xx. 8, 9.) And with what courage or confidence can these confederate sinners be expected to face, not only the armies terrestrial to be arrayed against them, but the brighter armies celestial, and the Almighty Redeemer, in his own proper person?

But this theory is open to other objections peculiar to itself. In the first place, Christ has no longer a body of flesh and blood, adapted to a residence in this gross, material world. The bodies of his saints, too, when raised in glory from the dead, will be spiritual, incorruptible, immortal, in all respects like the body of their Saviour. Is it likely that, with such bodies,—adapted to heaven, but not to earth,—certainly not to the earth as it is,—these glorified beings will come and dwell here for the long period of a thousand years? How much better for them to remain where they now are, in heaven, and convert the nations rather by spiritual influences, than by an ill-adapted bodily presence!

Besides, we can hardly conceive what sort of intercourse could exist between such spiritual, glorious beings, and gross men and women of earthly mould. Christ, it seems, is to be literally King in Zion; his subordinates are the glorified saints; but the people over whom he rules are of an entirely different nature and texture. They are in flesh and blood; they are corrupted and depraved; they live in families and in society, much as we do now; they marry and are given in marriage;

they grow and decay; they are born and they die. The question is, How beings of such different natures, so differently constituted and situated, are adapted to dwell personally together on the same earth, and sustain to each other the relations of rulers and ruled, of teachers and taught? What is to be the nature of their intercourse? How are their instructions to be given, and their orders to be issued and executed? In what way is the government to be administered, and the objects of it to be secured?

But there are other objections to the doctrine before us. The Scriptures represent the coming of Christ, the final conflagration, and the general judgment, as taking place together, or very near each other. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory" (Matt. xxv. 31). "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and all that is therein, shall be burned up" (2 Pet. iii. 10). It is certain, from these passages, that this earth, as it now is, is not to stand a thousand years after the coming of Christ. It is almost immediately to be burned up. It is certain, too, that the work of conversion is not to be carried on after the coming of Christ; because the judgment is immediately to follow, and the righteous and the wicked are to be separated to their eternal abodes.

I find another difficulty with the doctrine in question, growing out of the condition of those multitudes who are to be regenerated during the Millennium. How are they to be disposed of? What is to be done with them? The saints, who had died previous to the Millennium, have all been raised from the dead, to reign with Christ on the earth, in their glorified bodies. But here is a vast multitude, who have been converted during the millennial period. Are they to be exempt from death? And if so, are they to live in their gross bodies; or are their bodies to be changed? Or, if they are to die, and their bodies go down to the dust, when are they to have a resurrection? Are they to be raised with the wicked at the end of the world? Or shall there be a resurrection specially for

them; making three resurrections in all, instead of one, as the Scriptures represent? Now these are all fair questions, flowing legitimately from the theory under consideration; and what answer shall be given to them? Taking the Scriptures for our guide, what answers can be given?

We feel constrained, therefore, to reject this second theory (supported though it be by respectable names), as to the coming of Christ, and the introduction of millennial glory. The Scriptures adduced in its favor are not sufficient to support it; while the objections to it are apparently insuperable.

So much time has been taken in considering these two hypotheses with regard to the introduction of the millennium, that the remainder of the discussion must be deferred to another Lecture.

LECTURE LXX.

PROSPECTS OF THE CHURCH IN THIS WORLD.

In the preceding Lecture, I spoke of that future state of rest and peace to the church upon earth, so often referred to by ancient prophets, and so confidently expected by Christians at the present day,—the state commonly and not inappropriately styled *the Millennium*. We enter at once upon the question, *How is the Millennium to be introduced?* In discussing this question, we were to review the opinions of those who insist that the Millennium is to be ushered in *by the personal appearing of Christ*,—either to destroy this world, and reign with his glorified people in the new heavens and the new earth, or to purify the existing earth and hold his millennial kingdom here. We saw reason to reject both these theories. The question, therefore, is still before us, *How is the Millennium to be introduced?*

Some think that it will be introduced by a *miracle*. They disclaim the expectation of Christ's personal appearing, but believe that we are soon to "see *the sign* of the Son of man in heaven,"—some miraculous appearance or manifestation of Christ,—which will be followed by great results, and usher in his glorious kingdom. With regard to this, we have only to say, that the direct object of miracles seems never to have been so much the conversion of sinners, as *the attestation of the divine word*. And as this object has long since been accomplished, and the canon of Scripture closed, so the era of miracles seems to have passed finally away. It may well be doubted whether a proper miracle has been performed on the earth during the last fifteen hundred years. And I as much doubt whether there will be another for hundreds of years to come.

Or if miracles should be again performed, it may be questioned

whether they would aid essentially in the work of the world's conversion. They would undoubtedly startle those who witnessed them. They would attract attention and lead to various inquiry and speculation. But miracles alone never converted men, and they never will. Sinners are to be converted, if converted at all, through the influence of truth, and the accompanying power of the Holy Ghost; and now that the truth has been fully revealed and sufficiently attested, they can be converted in this way without miracles as well as with them.

How, then, is the Millennium to be introduced? We answer: Much will be done towards the accomplishment of this great object, by *providential arrangements*. God is now on the throne of providence, and he is ordering all things with a view to the ultimate triumph of his kingdom. He is not in a hurry in the disposal of events. In some instances, he may seem to be even "slack concerning his promises." But it is only because he is taking a wider sweep and preparing for the more effectual overthrow of his enemies. The great God does not exist as we do, in a little space,—confined to a narrow bound of years. He has time enough, and he takes it,—he has room enough, and he takes it,—in which to provide for his friends and overthrow his enemies, in a way that shall be most glorious to himself. And he will continue to roll along the great wheel of his providence, —to "overturn, and overturn, and overturn,"—till all those multiform evils which now afflict the earth and insult the heavens, shall be taken out of the way, and "the kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (Dan. vii. 27).

All this may not be done so speedily as some, in their zeal, desire and anticipate; but *it will assuredly be done*. The God of grace and of nature,—the Infinite Author of the promises, and the Supreme Disposer of events are the same; and while his truth is directing the faith of his people, and encouraging their prayers and hopes, the wheel of his providence is rolling right on, and bringing into a full accomplishment all the great and glorious things that he has ever spoken.

But the chief instrumentality and agency in introducing the

Millennium will be *the faithful preaching of the gospel and the faithful efforts of God's people*, accompanied (as they will be) by *the power and blessing of the Holy Spirit*. It is in this way that religion has always been promoted in the world. Under the former dispensation there was the ministry of judges and prophets, scribes and priests. At the first introduction of the gospel there was the ministry of the apostles, with their coadjutors and successors. And so it has been in all periods since. God has not sent back the dead from their abodes in the other world to preach to the living on the earth. Nor has he employed the ministry of angels for the publication of the gospel and the conversion of souls. He has made use of their ministry for various other purposes, but never for this. Nor if he had seen fit thus to employ them, is it likely that they would have had much success. They could not have entered into our feelings, or sympathized with us, or addressed us in the touching language of experience. The best agent for the conversion of sinners is, undoubtedly, a *converted sinner*. He who has himself felt the terrible power of sin and been delivered from it; he who, having tasted the wormwood and the gall, has had the cup of bitterness removed,—such an one will know, much better than an angel can, how to sympathize with the wanderer in all the stages of his downward career, and how to guide his faltering feet backward into the path of peace.

Those who insist on the necessity of Christ's *personal* presence, in order to the coming in of the Millennium, are wont to depreciate the power of the gospel, in the ordinary method of administering it. "The nations will never be converted by such an instrumentality, or in any such way." But these persons must have forgotten both the representations of Scripture on the subject, and the glorious conquests which the gospel, when accompanied by the Spirit's power, has already achieved. What cannot that instrument accomplish, which the inspired writers have described as "quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword," and "mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds"? What has not this instrument effected in the hands of glowing and faithful preachers, when set home by the influence of the Holy Ghost? Only a short time elapsed, in the first age of the

church, before it could be said of the apostles and evangelists, "Their sound has gone out into all the earth and their words to the end of the world." Nor does that age stand alone in testifying to the gospel's power. With what rapidity did it spread, and what mighty obstacles did it overcome, in the days of the Reformers? In the course of thirty years the light of evangelical truth had pervaded half Europe, and deeply penetrated the other half. Had the work gone forward through another half century, as it did during these thirty years, all nations might have been brought to the feet of the Saviour, and the promised Millennium had been realized.

And so it was with the Moravians, or United Brethren. When they commenced their missionary operations, their number did not exceed that of an ordinary congregation; and they were more limited in point of pecuniary resources than of men. And yet, in a few years, their missions were found in every quarter of the globe. They seemed likely, for a time, to fill the world with their doctrine.

In view of facts such as these, we see what the gospel, earnestly administered, and accompanied by the Spirit's power, is able to accomplish. We need not the ministry of angels to give efficiency to the truth of God. We need not the gift of miracles, or the risen dead, or the *personal* appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. We only need warm hearts, and devoted hands, quickened and encouraged by his *spiritual* presence. When the Lord shall stir up his people to pray earnestly, and give liberally, and labor faithfully and perseveringly, for the advancement of his kingdom; when he shall shed down his Spirit to excite to effort, and bless effort, so that his people shall not labor in vain; then shall the gospel's power be speedily and universally acknowledged, and all the good and glorious things which have been spoken respecting Zion shall be fulfilled.

Still another means which God may employ, in bringing in the millennial state, is *the destruction of the incorrigibly wicked.* It is by no means certain that, previous to the Millennium, all the inhabitants of the earth are to be converted. Vast multitudes of them may be, and probably will be, *cut off.* In the progress of things, the gospel will be universally diffused. It

will be preached in some form, to every creature. All those who embrace it, and enroll themselves on the side of God and his people, will be safe. But those who obstinately persist in rejecting it, and in opposing the triumphs of the Son of God, will be taken out of the way. As much as this is pretty clearly indicated in a variety of Scriptures. The power symbolized by the little horn of Daniel's fourth beast is represented as *terribly destroyed;*—immediately following which, "the kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven is given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (Dan. vii. 26). So of Paul's "man of sin," and "son of perdition," it is said, "Whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thess. ii. 8). And so in the Revelation, immediately preceding the annunciation of the Millennium, all the fowls of heaven are summoned together "unto the supper of the great God; that they may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great" (Rev. xix. 18). Here, certainly, are the symbols of great and terrible destruction; and the succeeding verses inform us *who it is* that is to be destroyed. It is "the beast, and the false prophet that wrought miracles before him." "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

In the judgment of some of the best commentators, the same power is denoted by Daniel's "little horn," and Paul's "man of sin," and John's "beast and false prophet;" and this power is the Papacy, including its civil and ecclesiastical dominion. This power has long been the grand enemy of God and man; and is likely to be so for a while to come. In the progress of events it may be expected to concentrate, within its own bosom, nearly all the organized opposition to the cause and kingdom of Christ, which is found on the earth. It may be expected to array itself against God and his church, in every form of hos-

tility which Jesuitical and diabolical ingenuity can devise. But it shall come to its end, and there shall be none to help it. It shall be utterly destroyed, and that without remedy. And then shall be ushered in that glorious day, when there shall be "nothing left to hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain;" —when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

But this brings us to another inquiry, in the progress of this discussion: When shall the millennial glory of the church be realized? On this point it becomes every interpreter of the divine word to speak modestly and cautiously. It is not for us to know definitely the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. Still, it does not follow that we may not know something. Daniel understood, not from direct revelation, but from books, that the time drew nigh when his people were to be restored to their own land. And the learned Jews were censured by our Saviour for not understanding "the signs of the times."

In regard to the question before us, we have two sources of evidence,—the word of God, and the providence of God. And from both these lights I think we may gather that the latter-day glory of Zion draweth night.

I am one of those who believe that the "little horn" of Daniel, and "the man of sin" of Paul, and "the beast and the false prophet" of John,—all which symbols, as before said, denote the Papacy,—are to continue 1,260 years. I cannot stop to assign reasons here; but such is my opinion. The principal difficulty lies in ascertaining when the Papacy,—in its antichristian, hornlike, beastlike character,—originated. The church of Rome was once a holy church,—as holy as any, in the times of the apostles. In the progress of years, it came to be an antichristian community. At what period then,—whereabouts in its history, was the terrible transition made? When did the church of Rome cease to be a Christian church, and became antichrist? When did it become a beast, a horn, in the sense of the prophets?

These questions are not easily answered. The change in the

character of the once holy church of Rome was not instantaneous, but progressive. Its usurpations were gradually assumed; its abominations were gradually accumulated; so that it is not easy to fix upon any one point, in the history of this church, and say,—here the Papacy originated.

There are three events, however, recorded in its history, which to my own mind, look more like the origin of the Papacy than any other. The first took place when the Pope of Rome was declared universal bishop, about the year 606. The second took place when the church of Rome became openly and professedly idolatrous,—the advocate and supporter of image worship,—in the year 727.[1] The third event occurred when the Pope became a temporal prince, and took rank among the civil sovereigns of Europe, about the year 656. Popery now became a civil power, a *horn* in the sense of the prophets. I am satisfied that the Papacy, in its antichristian character, did not commence earlier than the first of these periods, nor later than the third. If it commenced at the first period, and is to continue 1,260 years, its termination is just upon us. If it commenced at the second period, or the third, or anywhere between the two, its end is not far distant. It is comparatively near at hand. And when the judgment does set upon this antichristian power, to "consume and destroy it unto the end," then the latter-day glory of Zion will begin to shine.

There is another line of prophecy, which leads us pretty obviously to the same result. Among the symbolical representations of the Apocalypse is the sounding of the seven trumpets. The blasts of these trumpets are all of them *prophetical*, denoting events of great interest to the church, which, in the days of the writer, were far future. I have neither the time nor the ability to go into a minute explanation of them. Suffice it to say that, in the judgment of the best commentators, the first four trumpets set forth that train of calamities which befell the Western Roman Empire, between the fifth and seventh centu-

[1] At this time the church of Rome is supposed to have become "the great whore" of Babylon. See Rev. xvii. Idolatry, in the church of God, is often set forth under the image of *whoredom*. See Ezek. xvi.

ries, and by which this great empire was broken up. The fifth trumpet brings before us the rise of Mohammedanism, and the Saracen conquests, occurring in the seventh and eighth centuries, and reaching down as far as the thirteenth. The sixth trumpet portends the rise of the Turkish empire, by which the Saracen conquests were superseded, Constantinople was taken, and the Eastern Roman Empire was dissolved. And as the Turkish empire has long since passed its zenith, and is apparently verging to its dissolution, it is with good reason concluded that the blast of the sixth trumpet is now nearly or quite ended. We are hence led to look for the sounding of the seventh trumpet, as a near and certain event; and this is to usher in the glorious kingdom of Christ. "The seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. xi. 15).

The providence of God, as well as his word, is clearly indicating that the latter-day glory of the church is now near at hand. Of course, we can but just enter upon this interesting field of discussion here. We can but touch upon a few topics, the full consideration of which would require volumes.

How much has been done, during the last half century and a little more, towards putting an end to unchristian practices, and removing obstructions out of the way, so that the gospel may have free course, run, and be glorified! Intemperance, slavery, persecution, war, with many of the kindred vices, have come under a most searching examination and discussion, and can never again be regarded as they were before. Systems of idolatry, too, have been shaken; hoary despotisms have been undermined; and a struggle has been going on between the rights of the people and the usurpations of kings, which will not be likely to cease until the end is attained. Unknown parts of the earth have been explored, and nations before inaccessible to the gospel have been laid wide open to its sanctifying influence.

Meanwhile, the Bible has been translated into most of the languages of the world, and is being circulated, by thousands

and millions, in every quarter of the globe. Tracts and religious books are multiplied; schools are established; Christian missionaries are raised up, and sent forth to publish the gospel in all lands.

And while these things are doing for the heathen abroad, the good work at home is not wholly neglected. Sabbath schools are established in all Christian countries, and a vastly increased attention is paid to the religious instruction of the young. Concerts of prayer are universally observed, in which to supplicate the outpouring of God's Spirit upon the churches at home and the missions abroad; and, what is better than all, God's Spirit is poured out, and thousands upon thousands have been brought to the knowledge of the truth. In short, Christians have actually set themselves to the work,—not with the zeal and fervor that they should, but still with some degree of earnestness,—the work of the world's conversion; and God has blessed, and is blessing them in it; and they stand pledged to pursue it with unflinching perseverance, until the nations are given to Christ.

Nor are the forces of the grand enemy of God and his church unmoved by all this. They see what is going on, and whither the course of things is tending, and they are stirring up all their strength to oppose the triumphs of the Son of God. Satan is coming out in great wrath, as we might expect he would, under the impression that his time is short. Lines are already drawing, and sides are taking, and all things seem preparing for a conflict,—perhaps the final conflict,—which is to precede the ushering in of the universal kingdom of Christ.

Thus we see that the providence of God, as well as his word, betokens the speedy triumph of the gospel. Both his providence and his word conspire to assure us, that the world's redemption draweth nigh.

There yet remain some minor questions in regard to the Millennium, with the consideration of which this discussion will be concluded.

1. How long will the Millennium be likely to continue? The Bible says a thousand years; and unless there are very strong

reasons to the contrary, we are bound to acquiesce in this conclusion. Some interpreters, reckoning a day for a year, have thought that it might continue 360,000 years. But I cannot be of this opinion. For, in the absence of wars, and those other causes of premature destruction which have hitherto prevailed, in 360,000 years the earth would be entirely filled with inhabitants;—so filled, according to the computations of some, as not to allow a square foot to each individual. We are, then, either to limit the Millennium to a thousand literal years or we are to suppose this number to stand for a long, unknown period, —the definite for the indefinite.

2. Will the Jews be restored to their own land, during the Millennium? As the Jews are strongly attached to the Holy Land, and are looking toward it with intense expectation, it is altogether probable, when existing obstructions shall be removed, that multitudes of them will flock thither, and there be converted and reside. It is likely that nearly all the future inhabitants of Palestine may be Jews. Such a supposition is altogether reasonable; and the language of Scripture seems rather to favor it. But that the entire body of the Israelites will be shut up together in that country, through the whole Millennium, forming a distant church (as some suppose), and enjoying privileges beyond those of their Gentile brethren, I see no reason, from a sober interpretation of Scripture, to believe.

3. What is to be the state of the world during the Millennium? The Millennium will be a season of universal peace. Wars will be unknown. Men will "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; neither shall they learn war any more." Tyranny, oppression, slavery, and everything which conflicts with the kind, benevolent spirit of the gospel will be done away. And as vice at that period will have no victims, and the cause of premature sickness and mortality will in great measure cease to operate, it may be supposed that the human race will rapidly increase, and that the earth will be speedily filled with inhabitants. Still, as there will be so much temperance in eating and drinking, and the

means of acquiring a subsistence will be so generally and perfectly understood, there will doubtless be an abundance for the supply of human wants.

Vast advances will doubtless be made in every branch of useful knowledge, and the arts will be carried to the highest degree of perfection. Let any one consider the improvements which have been made in the arts during the last fifty years, and then, casting his eye forward, conceive of improvements as going on in the same ratio for a thousand years to come, and he may form some idea of the state of things in this respect at the close of the Millennium.

But the grand, distinguishing characteristic of the millennial period,—that which lies at the foundation of all the rest,—will be religious knowledge, holiness, and joy. God will then be known in all the earth; will be universally loved and served; and that inward satisfaction which flows from communion with him will be everywhere enjoyed. Churches will be planted and will prosper in all lands; the gospel will be preached to every creature; children will be early converted and brought to the knowledge of the truth; opposition, if it exist, will be concealed and restrained; and true religion will predominate over everything, and fill the earth. Men will have no longer any occasion to say one to another, "Know the Lord; because all will know him, from the least even unto the greatest." The earth will be full of the knowledge and love of God, as the waters fill the channels of the deep.

The moral purposes to be answered by the Millennium are numerous and great. God will show in this way his love to his church, his care of it, and his perfect ability to protect and enlarge it. He will show his entire control over the hearts of men, and the ease with which he can restrain and subdue human wickedness. He will show his absolute power over the spirits of darkness, to bind or loose, as seemeth good in his sight.

In the Millennium God will show of what the soul of man is capable, even in its present state; of what the earth is capable; and what it might have been thousands of years before, but for the prevalence of human wickedness.

In the Millennium God will display his faithfulness, in causing his Son to see the full travail of his soul, and in causing all his glorious predictions respecting Zion to be accomplished. And having cheered his laboring, distressed people, through a long series of ages with the prospect of this glorious day, he will in the progress of it bring an innumerable multitude to heaven, who might otherwise have sunk down to hell; will consummate the triumphs of his church on earth, and fill the world above with his glory and his praise forever.

INDEX.

INDEX.

Page

Ability, natural and moral, ... 307-313
distinction important, ... 315
Adam and Eve, their fall not unaccountable, ... 362
the curse upon them, ... 366
Angels, the doctrine of, ... 223-226
their employments, ... 228
the fallen, their existence and employments, ... 228-232
of the churches not bishops, ... 655
Annihilation, different forms of the doctrine, ... 610
arguments for it considered, ... 611-616
arguments against it, ... 616-623
bad tendencies of the doctrine, ... 623-625
Apocryphal books, why rejected, ... 71-75
Apostles, their testimony examined, ... 96-99
not bishops, ... 652
Arguments *à priori* for the divine existence, ... 26
Argument from design vindicated, ... 44-46
Assumptions in the argument *à posteriori*, ... 28
Atheistical objections considered, ... 41-48
Atonement, its necessity proved, ... 405-413
why necessary, ... 410-413
by the sufferings and death of Christ, ... 415
objections to this view, ... 416-418
how efficacious, ... 419-424
objections to the view taken, ... 416-417
universal as to its sufficiency, ... 425
accepted of the Father, ... 426
importance of the doctrine, ... 433
connected with moral government, ... 268

Backslider, how differ from the sinner, ... 469
Baptism of proselytes, ... 690
of John not Christian, ... 682
import of, ... 683
not immersion exclusively, ... 684-688
not to be repeated, ... 688
proper subjects of, ... 691-698
of infants, arguments for, ... 692-698
in place of circumcision, ... 693-695
Baptized children not church-members, ... 698
sustain a covenant relation to the church, ... 706
Bible, the fact of it proves divine existence, ... 35
Bishop and Presbyter, the same originally, ... 650-657
Christ, his Divinity, ... 153-156
his humanity, ... 157
his mediatorship, ... 158
why called the Son of God, ... 160
his sufferings, ... 427-431
his intercession, ... 434-444
Church, signification of, ... 640
when instituted, ... 640
first, patriarchal, ... 641

Page

Church, second, national, ... 641
third, congregational, ... 622
a voluntary association, ... 643
terms of membership, ... 643
the question of creeds and covenants, ... 644–645
its independence, ... 646–648
fellowship, ... 646
its officers, ... 651–661
the claim of bishops considered, ... 651–659
two orders of officers, presbyters and deacons, ... 659
discipline defined, ... 663
proper subjects of, ... 663
its objects, ... 664
the satisfaction required, ... 666
prospects of in this world, ... 755–775
Close communion disproved, ... 712–722
how removed, ... 723–725
objections considered, ... 726
Conscience described, ... 279
its true dictates to be obeyed, ... 327–329
Consubstantiation described and refuted, ... 735
Councils, mutual and *ex parte*, ... 666
Covenant of redemption, ... 446
of grace, ... 447–449
of the visible church, ... 450
Creation explained, ... 321–323
of angels, ... 321
of this world, ... 235–244

Days, in Gen. i. 1, literal days, ... 239–241
Death threatened to our first parents eternal death, ... 356
eternal, why not immediately executed, ... 358
temporal described, ... 533
terminates our probation, ... 534–538
its procuring cause sin, ... 539
its final causes, ... 539
its immediate consequences, ... 541
Decrees or purposes of God, ... 182–191
distinct from his law, ... 183
his desires, ... 183
foreknowledge, and precede it, ... 184–186
universal, ... 186
eternal, ... 188
objections considered, ... 188
Depravity, universal, ... 369–373
total, ... 373–380
what not implied in it, ... 374–376
what implied, ... 376
proved, ... 377–380
natural, ... 382–390
connection with Adam's sin, ... 383–388
what not implied, ... 387
objections considered, ... 388
importance of the doctrine, ... 380
Development theory considered, ... 44

Election explained, ... 194
proved, ... 195
not grounded on foreknowledge, ... 195

Page
Election not an arbitrary decree, ... 186
objections considered, ... 196–198

Faith in Christ described, ... 478
why necessary, ... 481
how it differs from faith in God, ... 482

Geology confirms the Bible, ... 243
God a personal being, ... 25
the idea of not innate, ... 27
not conscious of his existence, ... 27
proofs of his existence, ... 28–40
attributes of, ... 49–58
his omnipresence, ... 50
his moral attributes, ... 52–54
his decrees or purposes, ... 182–193
his ultimate end in his works, ... 256–263
his essential glory, and declarative glory, ... 257
his highest glory, and the greatest good, the same, ... 260
the Supreme Disposer, and a Moral Governor, ... 264–275
to be regarded and loved in both these characters, ... 269
his moral government described, ... 266
his will the exponent of right, but not the author of it, ... 321–324
his great plan the best conceivable, ... 351
Godhead, personal distinctions in, ... 164–168

Heathen, present state of, ... 62–64
Heaven, a place, ... 574
its enjoyments, ... 575
Hell, a place, ... 575
its miseries eternal, ... 576–597
its punishments not disciplinary, ... 578
objections to endless punishment, ... 583–597
Holiness, in its nature, active, ... 330–333
objections considered, ... 333
importance of this view, ... 335
consists in love, ... 337

Infant character, ... 391–404
Infants not mere animals, ... 392
not depraved without sin, ... 393
sinners, ... 394–397
not sinned in a previous state, ... 397
not an inactive sinful nature, ... 399
actual sinners—selfish from the first, ... 399–403
objections considered, ... 399–403
Infant baptism, history of, ... 697–698
import of, ... 701–705
benefits of, ... 708–710
Infidels, characters of, ... 64
Inspiration explained, ... 121–124
promised, ... 128
claimed by the sacred writers, ... 128
always held by the church, ... 130–132
objections considered, ... 132–138
importance of, ... 139
Intermediate place disproved, ... 542–547

Page

Judgment general, the fact of it, ... 567
the time of it, ... 570
who the judge, ... 570
who judged, ... 570
for what judged, ... 571
its duration, ... 571
its object, ... 572
its issues, ... 573
Justification, legal, described, ... 584
evangelical, described, ... 585
same as forgiveness, ... 585
the sole ground of it, ... 587
the conditions of it, ... 488
Paul and James reconciled, ... 488
importance of the doctrine, ... 490

Lord's Supper, in place of the Passover, ... 729
designed to be perpetuated, ... 730
early perversion of it, ... 730
import of it, ... 737
an ordinance for Christians, ... 740

Man before the fall, ... 353–359
on trial, ... 355
Matter not eternal, ... 28–33
Means of grace described, ... 513–515
sinners to use them, by directly yielding to them, ... 516
Millennium, not introduced by the personal coming of Christ, ... 756–764
to be introduced, in part, by providential arrangements, ... 766
by the faithful preaching of the gospel, and efforts of God's people, ... 766
by the destruction of the incorrigibly wicked, . . . 768
when introduced, ... 770
how long continue, ... 773
state of the world, ... 774
Mind, existence of, proves the divine existence, ... 34
its philosophy closely connected with theology, ... 276
to be considered under four divisions, ... 277
the sensational described, ... 277
the intellectual, ... 278–281
the emotional, ... 281–294
Miracles prove the divine existence, ... 36
explained, ... 107
prove the Scriptures from God, ... 109–113
vindicated, ... 107–110
Motives, three classes of, ... 284, 288, 293
Mystery of the incarnation, ... 157
of the Trinity, ... 177

Necessity, natural and moral distinguished, ... 313
New Testament, the canon of, how settled, ... 74

Old Testament, sanctioned by Christ, ... 69
Christ's the same as ours, ... 70
Ordination, what, ... 661

Perfection described, ... 498
arguments for it considered, ... 500–504
against it, ... 504–509

	Page
Perfection not conditioned on faith,	505
pretensions to it injurious,	509
Perseverence of saints explained,	591
proved,	592–595
objections considered,	595
Persons in the Godhead, how understood,	172
Peter, no supremacy among the apostles,	743–748
never bishop of Rome,	749
Prayer, answers to, prove the divine existence,	37
described,	520
of faith, what not implied in it,	521–523
described,	524
its efficacy explained,	524
objections considered,	525
its great object stated,	529
Presbyters, lay, no authority for,	700
Prophecies prove the Scriptures from God,	114
Providence of God explained,	245–247
particular,	247
universal,	248
how administered,	250
objections considered,	250
desirable,	252
importance of the doctrine,	252–255
Popery, fundamental principle of,	742
Popes have no supremacy from Peter,	751–753
Purposes of God, learned from his works,	203–210
abuses of,	211–216
uses of,	216–220
Regeneration, its necessity,	452
its nature,	453–457
preparatory work,	455
an active change, like conversion,	457–461
importance of this view,	459
its causes,	462–463
work of the Spirit, and yet the subject active,	464–465
operation of the Spirit direct,	466
how differs from sanctification,	468
Repentance described,	471–474
why necessary,	475–476
Reprobation explained,	198
unconditional, but not arbitrary,	199
not the exact counterpart of election,	199
objections considered,	200
Resurrection of the body,	554–564
same body raised, but not the same particles,	556
not the same properties,	558
of the body proved,	559–564
to take place at the last day,	564
first resurrection, what,	565
Revelation, need of,	59–67
why not given to all,	65
Right and wrong, ground of the distinction,	317–329
opinions entertained,	317
difference lies not in education, customs, etc.,	318
not in the tendencies of actions,	319
not in the mere will of God,	321–325
not in the constitution of our minds,	324

	Page
Right and wrong, lies ultimately in the nature of God,	325
is immutable and eternal,	325
Sabbath, instituted in paradise,	626
sacred among the heathen,	627
of universal and perpetual obligation,	628–631
changed to the first day of the week,	632–636
objections to the change,	632
how observed,	637
Sacrament, origin and meaning of the term,	669–671
appropriate marks of,	671
Sacraments, the Romish,—five of them rejected,	673–675
only two, baptism and the Lord's supper,	675
on what their efficacy depends,	677
benefits of,	677
Scripture, canon of,	68–78
its authenticity or genuineness,	78–86
its uncorruptedness,	86–92
its various readings,	91
credibility of,	93–105
its truth shown by existing facts,	99–102
divine authority of,	106–120
inspiration of,	121–140
interpretation of,	141–152
Serpent that tempted Eve, what,	360
his speaking not a miracle,	361
the curse upon him,	365
Sin, in its nature active,	330–333
objection to this view,	333
importance of this view,	335
all resolvable into selfishness,	337
introduction of,	340–352
opinions entertained,	340
God could have prevented it,	332–346
why God permitted it,	347
objections considered,	349–352
Soul, its immortality,	530–531
not material, but spiritual,	532
exists separate from the body,	533
Souls of the righteous, at death, go immediately to heaven,	547–550
of the wicked go immediately to hell,	551
departed, recognize each other,	553
know what is done on earth,	553
Spirit, his personality,	166–169
his divinity proved,	169
Succession in the divine mind,	55
Transubstantiation, when introduced,	731
disproved,	733–735
Trinity, explained,	172
proved,	173
traces of it among the heathen,	175
objections considered,	176–179
importance of the doctrine,	179
Universalism, different forms of,	598–609
that of Relly,	598
the fatalist,	598
restoration,	599
Hosea Ballou,	599–607